



# LORD MAHAVIRA

BOOL CHAND, M.A., PH.D. (Lond.)

'सर्व्वं लोकास्मि सारमयं'  
'TRUTH ALONE MATTERS'



JAIN CULTURAL RESEARCH SOCIETY  
PARSHVANATH VIDYASHRAMA  
P. O. Benares Hindu University.

*Published by*  
RAJHANS PUBLICATIONS,  
for  
Jain Cultural Research Society,  
Banaras Hindu University.

Rs. 4/8/-.

*Printed by*  
RAMA KRISHNA DAS,  
at the  
Benares Hindu University Press,  
Banaras.

## PREFACE.

In preparing this book, the first large one to be published by Jain Cultural Research Society, I have been assisted at every step by Pandit Dalsukh Malvania, Asstt. Prof. of Jain Philosophy at the College of Oriental Studies, Benares Hindu University. I am deeply indebted to him for his help.

Shriyuta Nathmal Tatia, M.A., Research Scholar, Calcutta University has very kindly read the proofs and added the concluding chapter, which I had not been able to complete owing to various preoccupations.

With Pandit Sukhlalji, Pandit Mahendra Kumarji and other Scholars I have had the benefit of discussing portions of the book. Such discussion has always been of the utmost help to me. The responsibility for opinions stated here is, however, fully mine.

23-3-48.

BOOL CHAND.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INDIAN SOCIETY IN 6TH CENTURY B. C.	1-13
Character of the Age : Social Conditions : Religion and Philosophy : Economic Conditions : Political Conditions :	
MAHAVIRA'S BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE	14-27
Tirthankara Parsva : The Jain Idea of Biography : Mahavira's Biographies : Parentage and Birth : Facts of Early Life :	
PERIOD OF PREPARATION	28-43
Mahavira's Natural Bent of Mind : Renunciation : The Ascetic life : Penances : His wanderings : Gosala Mankhaliputra :	
ENLIGHTENMENT	44-60
Kevalin : Jina : Tirthankara :	
ENUNCIATION OF THE TRUTH	61-79
Mahavira's Teachings : View of the world : Fundamental Truths : System of Ethics : Jain Atheism :	
PROPAGATION OF THE DOCTRINE	80-95
Conversion of the Ganadharas : Influence at Royal Courts : Licchavis and other Republican Clans : Map of Mahavira's travels : Mahavira's Commu- nity of Followers : Nirvana :	
RIVAL SECTS	96-107
Classification of Creeds : Buddhists : Ajivikas : Brahmanic Schools : Nihnavas :	
CONCLUSION	108-115



## INDIAN SOCIETY IN 6TH CENTURY B.C.

### *Character of the Age :*

6th century B.C., the age in which Mahavira was born, was a period of great intellectual stir practically all over the world. Greece, Persia and China as well as India—all centres of important civilisations—experienced ferment in the realm of thought. The advent of Socrates and his distinguished pupils and contemporaries in Greece, of Zoroaster in Persia, and of Lao Tse and Confucius in China marked a revolution in the thought of those countries in just the same way as the coming of Mahavira and the Buddha meant the advent of philosophical rationalism in our own country.

In Indian society this age was in many ways a period of transition and uncertainty. The state of society which is revealed in the religious literature of the Jains and the Buddhists is quite different from that which is depicted in the Epics of the later Vedic literature and is, of course, fundamentally different from that depicted in the Vedas. From the simple and on the whole republican social organisation of the Vedic times the country had been passing through a process of gradual stratification until by the time of the birth of Mahavira caste distinctions and priestly oligarchy had become a source of enormous social irritation and a means of popular exploitation. The simple religion of nature-worship implied in the hymns of the Rig-Veda had similarly been developing into a curious combination of theoretical monotheism and practical worship of a multiplicity of gods and divine satellites with an admixture of elaborate ritualism and superstition. This development was disturbing to the equanimity of the thinking part of the population, and already there had grown up a school of meditators who discarded the rituals and pantheistic worship under priestly auspices and retired to forests for meditation and con-



templation of the truth, thus giving rise to a form of philosophical pantheism. In economic life agriculture was still the main occupation of the people and the village (ग्राम) the unit of administration and the centre of all activities, but the period was marked by a transition to cottage industrialism and a remarkable growth of trade and commerce. Politically, a new type of republican and tribal kingdom was arising, which was rapidly assuming a monarchical form of government and imperialistic designs in the sense of territorial conquests. The whole life of the community was in short undergoing fundamental transformation. The geographical outlook of Indo-Aryans, limited for a long time to the Gangetic valley, had extended to the eastern and southern regions. The art of writing had got diffused among men and women, and because of the development of commercial contacts with foreign lands the mental horizon of the people had greatly broadened. These changes had their impact on the social, religious, economic and political conditions of the country, and this needs to be examined in some detail.

### *Social Conditions :*

Society in 6th century B.C. had definitely come to be organised on the basis of caste. Historians are not always agreed on the origin of the caste system in India. When the Aryans came to India, it seems quite certain that they were a homogenous mass of people and were not divided into distinct castes or even classes. The formation of classes did not occur until after their settlement over extensive territories in the Gangetic plains, and it took place in the age of the later Samhitās, but not in the form of a rigid caste system at first. There are passages in Śruti literature which indicate quite clearly that the knowledge of Vedic texts and ceremonies rather than the fact of birth in a Brahmana family, qualified a person to be a Brahmana. The development of caste rigidity can be traced through the period of later Samhitās, the *Vājasaneyā Samhitā* for instance prefers a Brahman for priestly duties descended

from three generations of Rishis. Such rules are evidence of a deliberate attempt to make caste system more and more static. But as yet those essential features, the prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage, which are the special characteristics of caste system today, had not developed in their fulness, nor had the Brahmana yet attained an unquestioned position of supremacy, the Kashatriya being able to contest it with him at every step. In establishing the supremacy of the Brahmans the most important part was played by the sacrifice (यज्ञ), the ritual.

The early Vedic age was one of creative impulses. It was marked by "a charming appreciation of all that is good and sublime in nature, leading to outburst of individual enthusiasm in inspiring stanza addressed to various divinities." The theology of the later Vedic literature did not much differ from the theology of the hymns, but the religious spirit had undergone a change. The creative age had changed into an age of criticism, and inspiration naturally yielded place to formalism. Of this formalism the priestly class, being professionally given to the study of old Vedic texts, became inevitably the beneficiary, and so formalism naturally tended to elaborate itself. Sacrifices were developed in endless details, and the priestly class now devoted its whole attention to find out the *hidden* and *mystic* meaning of the rites and ceremonies. The ceremonies were multiplied until they comprehended both domestic and other great sacrifices. The domestic ceremonies embraced the whole course of a man's life, right from the conception in the mother's womb up to death, or rather beyond it, for several ceremonies refer to the departed souls. The well-known forty *samskaras* or sacraments, although finally drawn up at a later period, reflected the conditions of the age before the birth of Mahavira. These sacraments included twenty-six *Grihya-rituals* (1) गर्भाधान, the rite to cause conception : (2) पुंसवन, the rite to secure the birth of a male child ; (3) सीमन्तोन्नयन, the parting of the pregnant wife's hair by-

the husband ; (4) जातकर्म, the rite for the new-born child ; (5) नामकरण, the ceremony of naming the child ; (6) अन्नप्राशन, the first feeding of the child with solid food ; (7) चूडाकर्म, the tonsure of the child's head ; (8) उपनयन, initiation ceremony ; (9) to (12) the four vows undertaken for studying the different Vedas ; (13) समावर्तन, the completion of studentship ; (14) सहस्रमंचारिणीसंयोग, marriage ; (15) to (19) five great daily sacrifices to the gods, manes, men, goblins and Brahman ; (20) to (26) the seven पाकयज्ञ—small sacrifices—which had to be performed mostly by the householder himself, and fourteen major rituals—the seven kinds of हविर्यज्ञ and seven kinds of सोमयज्ञ in which three sacred fires were kindled, to which offerings of cake, grain, milk, honey, etc., were made. In the *Somayajnas* even animals were killed. To this list could be added numerous other sacrifices, like the *Vrātya-stoma*, the *Rajsiya*, the *Ashwamedha*, and the *Purushamedha*. Some of these sacrifices were informed by a new spirit of symbolism and spirituality, evident for instance in the building of the altar, and lasted from twelve days to a year or years.

The elaboration of these rituals led to the growth of Brahmanism, or the hierarchy of Brahmanas ; and with Brahmanism came the rigidity of the caste system. Under rigid caste system, in which a man's caste was determined by the fact of birth, the Brahmanas became parasites living on the resources of the industrial classes without doing anything worthwhile to compensate the other classes. The Kshatriya class, which had always been active evolving philosophical systems and which had stood for experience as against the Brahmanic emphasis on intellect, felt the iniquity and injustice of this position and revolted against it. Mahavira and the Buddha freely denounced the arbitrary distinctions of caste and proclaimed the equality of all human beings, and in doing so they were giving an effective expression to the innermost feeling of the masses.

With the growing rigidity of the caste system, the position of women also had deteriorated. During

even the later Vedic age there were exceptional cases of women attaining a high position in society and in the learned world. The stories of Gargi and Maitreyi mentioned in बृहदारण्यक Upanishad are remarkable examples of this. But by the 6th century B.C. the position had become deteriorated. With the increase in royal power, Indo-Aryan chiefs had become polygamous. Women were denied the right of inheriting property, and a father had the right to divide his property among his sons according to his will. On the death of her husband, a widow passed on to his family like his property. The prevailing attitude towards women is apparent in the initial reluctance of the Buddha to admit them into his religious order. A little later, Megasthenes also said that "the Brahmans do not communicate a knowledge of philosophy to their wives." But Mahavira and the Buddha took a highly rational attitude in this matter ; both permitted the inclusion of women into their *sanghas*, and this step marked a revolutionary improvement of their status in society.

### *Religion and Philosophy :*

In the domain of religion and philosophy, 7th and 6th centuries B.C. were a period of great confusion and doubt. The period was marked by growing orthodoxy on one side and extensive revolt against it on the other. The Buddhist literature mentions as many as sixty-three different philosophical schools, all presumably non-Brahmana, existing at the time of the Buddha ; Jain literature, which is more analytical in its approach, mentions an even larger number of such heretical doctrines.

The religion of the early Aryans had been simple nature-worship. Its simplicity stands in striking contrast to the later elaboration of the religious side of life by the priests. The objects of worship were the great phenomena of nature, conceived as alive and usually represented in anthropomorphic shape, like *ऋषि* (the Heaven), *पृथिवी* (the Earth), *सूर्य* (the Sun), *उषा* (the

Dawn), अग्नि (the Fire), and सोम (the well-known sacrificial drought). In the late tenth book of the Rig-Veda, beginning of philosophy made its appearance ; the multiplicity of gods was questioned and the unity of the universe asserted. As the centre of culture shifted from the west to the east, new gods—originally perhaps of the aborigines—like Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva, came to be included in the Hindiu pantheon, the original Vedic gods were thrust into the background, and as a result a change occurred in the spirit of religion and in the spirit of worship. The borrowed gods belonged to a system which was nurtured under a different conception of godhead from that underlying the Aryans' nature-gods; they had to be dreaded and appeased by the performance of sacrifices and not approached in confidence, but once propitiated they were supposed to help their worshippers against their enemies, open or hidden. Their gods were terrific, and so the propitiatory ritual became weird and mystic. Originally the post-priest of the Rig-Veda was content to invite the gods, in the fulness of his heart, to partake of his offerings ; now the priest becomes more anxious to secure a monopoly of the god to himself and to his patrons and to avert him and his grace from his rival worshippers. So the technique of sacrifice became enormously elaborated and obscured, religion became formalised and completely divorced from ethics.

This development was a particular characteristic of the age which marked the composition of the *Brahmanas*. The growth of ritualism led to the increase of the priestly class, and since the priestly class was the beneficiary of the performance of these rituals and sacrifices it was in its interest to develop ritualism still further. It became a vicious circle. The earlier sacrifices used to occupy one day, now they began to last for weeks, months and even years. The earlier sacrifices used to require at the most seven priests, होतृ, पौतृ, नेष्टृ, आनीध्र, प्रशास्तृ, अध्वर्यु and ब्रह्मन्; now the sacrifices required seventeen, classified as follows—

- (1) होतृ with मंत्रावरण, अच्छावाक and ग्रावस्तुतृ
- (2) उद्गातृ with प्रस्तोतृ, प्रतिहृत् and सुब्रह्मण्य
- (3) अध्वर्यु with प्रतिप्रस्थातृ, नेष्टृ and उन्नेतृ
- (4) ब्रह्मन् with ब्राह्मणाच्छंसिन्, आग्नीध्र and पोतृ

The seventeenth, ऋत्विक् was the सदस्य who superintended the whole sacrifice as its presiding priest.

On its part, the priestly class directed all its energies to the further development of ceremonial side, which they worked out in endless detail and to which they attached the most fanciful and mystic significance. The elaboration of the technical part of the sacrifice and the growth of a special class of experts who made a monopoly of the art became so marked that intellectualism of this kind began to be confused with morality, and virtue became a by-word for fineness and fussiness over little things.

This state of things was very disconcerting to the serious-minded section of society, and many people took recourse to meditation and contemplation of the truth. They discarded the rituals and the pantheistic worship of the priests, and developed what is known as the way of knowledge (ज्ञानमार्ग) distinguished from the way of ritualism (कर्ममार्ग) of the Brahmana. From out of their philosophical and metaphysical speculations there developed the six famous schools of Indian philosophy—the Sāṅkhya school of Kapila, the Yoga school of Patanjali, the Nyāya school of Gautam, the Vaiśeṣika school of Kanāda, the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini, and the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā or Vedānta of Vyāsa. These Upanishadic philosophers concerned themselves with the problems of the origin of the world, the nature of godhood and the creative process in general ; and in seeking to solve these problems they expounded in fact a new religion which aimed at the achievement of deliverance from mundane existence by the absorption of the individual soul (आत्मा) in the world-soul (ब्रह्म) by virtue of correct knowledge. The underlying principles of this new religion upon

which all philosophers were agreed were, first, that all reality in the ultimate issue must be reduced to one, called variously ब्रह्मन् (the holy power) or आत्मा (the soul); and secondly, that a man may die repeated deaths in the next world, the doctrine, that is to say, of transmigration of soul, first mentioned in an outline form in the छान्दोग्य Upanishad and then evolved in the form of the gospel of कर्म i.e. action which determines on a man's death the nature of his next birth, in the बृहदारण्यक Upanishad. But these philosophers disagreed on many other points. Pantheistic ritualism was producing its parallel in the world of thought, a philosophical pantheism. The excessive devotion of the priest to the ritual had thus produced a reaction, but the reaction was proving as confused as the stimulus itself. Neither ritualism nor philosophy really succeeded in restoring to religion that element of ethical values which it had possessed in an eminent degree in the early Vedic period but which had inevitably got eroded from it during its progress from Kuru-Panchala country to Kosala-Videha and the country to the further east. The prevailing religion in 6th century B.C., therefore, when Mahavira was born, was significantly unsatisfying and in a chaotic state.

### *Economic Conditions :*

From the point of view of economic structure, Indian society in 6th century B.C. was passing through a transition from a cultivating and handicraft to a cottage industry stage. Early Aryans were a pastoral people, their chief occupations being cultivation and cattle-rearing. The land was ploughed, and the plough was drawn by oxen. Cattle consisted of kine and sheep. Weaving in cotton and wool was done but of industries very little was known. As the Aryans spread towards the east and the south and occupied the fertile plains of the Ganges and the Yamuna, their material prosperity considerably increased. The plough gradually assumed a large and heavy form; there is mention

at one place of twenty-four oxen being harnessed to one plough. Irrigation also improved, and along with it the quality and variety of grains raised from the ground. At this time the society got divided into a number of classes and castes ; and among the servile castes we find mention of such as fishermen, shepherds, fire-rangers, charioteers, workers in jewelry, basket-makers, washer-men, rope-makers, dyers, chariot-makers, weavers, slaughterers, cooks, professional acrobats, musicians, etc. In the literature collectively known as the later Samhitas there is frequent mention of merchant and also userer. The knowledge and use of metals had become quite extensive ; besides gold, we find mention of tin, lead and silver, and possibly copper and iron. But during this period Indian economy remained on the whole a purely rural economy, with arts and crafts only incidentally developed.

In the 6th century B.C., however, and about this period our information is both large and accurate, the structure of economy began to get fundamentally transformed. (1) The ग्राम was still the unit of administration and the centre of all activities ; but the *grama* was apparently a generic term, meaning almost anything from a group of two or three houses to an indefinite number. In the Buddhist texts there is also an occasional mention of cities in northern India, about twenty such having been recounted, six of which are reckoned as sufficiently important ones. (2) Further, rural economy was based upon a system of village communities of land-owners and marked by instances of collectivist initiative. The peasant proprietors had a nominal head in the भोजक (or headman) who, as their representative at political headquarters and municipal head, was paid by certain dues and fines. (3) Above all, in the arts and crafts considerable proficiency and specialisation of industry had been reached. "A list of callings given in the *Milindapanho* reveals three separate industries in the manufacture of bows and arrows, apart from any ornamental work on the same. In the same



work, the allusion to a professional winnower of grain indicates a similar division of labour to our own threshing-machinists and steamplough-owners who tour in rural districts." Important handicrafts were organised into guilds, and at the head of each guild was a president (प्रमुख) or elderman (जेदुक), and these leaders were often important ministers in attendance upon and in favour with the King. There is evidence that regulation of industrial life was on a corporate basis; not only individuals but families were often referred to in terms of traditional calling. (4) The age was marked by freedom of initiative and a high degree of mobility in labour. This finds exemplification in stories like those of enterprising woodworkers who, failing to carry out the orders for which prepayment had been made, were summoned to fulfil their contract and, instead of abiding in their lot, secretly made a mighty ship and emigrated with their families shipping down the Ganges by night and so out to sea till they reached a fertile island. (5) Trade and commerce was fast developing. Partnerships in commerce, either permanent or on specified occasions only, are frequently mentioned in Buddhist and Jain texts. The overland caravans are sometimes represented as going 'east and west' and across deserts that took days and nights to cross. They may have gone from Benares, the chief commercial and industrial centre in early Buddhist and Jain age, across the deserts of Rajputana to the seaport of modern Broach or the seaboard of Sovira and its capital Roruka. Westward of these ports there was traffic with Babylon. The nature of exports and imports is not always specified, but they would seem to include such articles as "silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewelry and gold." It appears that trade was free, in the sense that it was determined solely by supply and demand and unhampered by any system of statutory fixed prices. The use of standard currency and of substitutes for money, like instru-

ments of credit, also appears to have become common. The taking of interest was considered legitimate and the payment of debts an honourable obligation.

Of this developing capitalist economy the natural need was that there should be a theory of economic individualism to support it. This found its echo in spiritual doctrines like Jainism and Buddhism, which placed their emphasis upon the individual rather than upon a World-Soul. The prevailing Brahmanical religion with its traditional restrictions, its caste system, and its expensive sacrifices had begun to collide at an ever-increasing number of points with the existing economic ethics, and this made the growth of "heretical" sects inevitable which, originating outside heiratic circles, would offer a philosophic justification for a concept of individualism and a development of individual personality.

### *Political Conditions :*

The economic changes leading to the growth of apitalism in society caused corresponding changes in the political constitution of the country. The power of the tribal chieftain of old increased and he became more or less a real king, with power to deprive any commoner of his private property. The nobles obtained the position of landlords or intermediaries between the cultivators and the king. Slaves and serfs also increased in number. Within the framework of autocracy, there were still operative certain democratic elements, e.g. (1) the people's voice in choosing the king ; (2) the promises made by the king at his coronation ; (3) the king's dependence on the ministry ; (4) the popular assemblies, the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*; but these democratic limitations upon the powers of the king were becoming increasingly obsolete. The territorial concept of the state was becoming more pronounced.

In the 6th century B. C. northern India seems to have been divided into the following sixteen states :

(1) Anga, covering possibly the Patna and Monghyr districts, (2) Magadha, covering the Patna and Gaya (3) Kasi, covering Benares, Ghazipur and Mirzapur districts, (4) Vajji, covering Muzaffarpur, Saran and Champaran districts of north Behar, (5) Kosala, possibly covering the Lucknow and Fyzabad districts, (6) Mala, possibly covering the Gorakhpur district, (7) Vamsa ( or वत्स ), covering the modern Allahabad and Banda districts, (8) Cheti, possibly the present Canwpoore and Unao districts, (9) Panchala, which may be identified with modern Rohilkhand, (10) Kuru, covering the Aligarh, Meerut, Delhi and Karnal districts, (11) Matsya, possibly covering the present Gurgaon district along with portions of Alwar and Jaipur states, (12) Surasena, possibly covering the Muttra district and portions of Bharatpore and Jaipur states, (13) Asuraka, on the Godaveri, (14) Avanti, which seems to be just another name for Malwa, (15) Gandhara, presumably covering the north-west districts of the Punjab as far as Peshawar and adjoining districts, and (16) Kamboja, which may possibly be identified with the modern districts of Kabul and Jalalabad. These sixteen names are given in several places in the Buddhist text; *Anguttara-Nikaya* and partially repeated in the Samskrit work *Mahavastu*. The Jain text *Bhagawati*, which also enumerates sixteen names, described the delimitation of states at a somewhat later period ; the geographical margins of the states mentioned there is much wider.

Among these states four seem to have been particularly powerful Kosala with its capital at Sravasti, Avanti with its capital at Ujjaini, Vamsa (or Vatsa) with its capital at Kausambhi, and Magadha with its capital at Rajgriha; and the period was marked by perpetual military contests between them. Ultimately Magadha, under its king Bimbisara (or Srenika), rose to the position of paramountcy. It is possible that the big states included certain more or less autonomous clan or tribal areas, which enjoyed a form of

home rule. The Sakiyas, for instance, were a tribe of the Kosalas, but held an autonomous tenure.

Besides kingdoms, republic states also existed. Among the republics the following names were prominent :

- The Sakiyas, with their capital at Kapilvastu ;
- The Bulis, with their capital at Allakappa ;
- The Kalamas, with their capital at Kesaputta ;
- The Bhaggas, with their capital at Sumsumara ;
- The Koliyas, with their capital at Ramagama ;
- The Mallas, with their capital at Pava ;
- The Mallas, with their capital at Kusinara ;
- The Moriyas, with their capital at Pippalivana ;
- The Videhas, with their capital at Mithila ; and
- The Lichchavis, with their capital at Vaisali.

These tribal republics seem to have occupied in 6th century B.C. the whole country east of Kosala between the mountains and the Ganges. Each one of them included several big towns besides the capital. In the territory of the Sakiyas, which covered the lower slopes of the Himalayas, there is mention of a number of towns like Chauma, Samagama, Khomadussa, Silavai, Medalumpa, Nagaraka, Ulumpa, Devadaha, and Sakkarā. The administrative business of these tribal republics and the more important judicial work was carried out in public assembly at which the young and old were alike present. The meetings were held in mote-halls, i.e. roofy structure supported by pillars without walls, and the procedure adopted in these meetings seems to have been as in modern parliaments. A single chief was elected as office-holder ; he bore the title of *raja*, although the term did not mean king. He was something like the Roman consul. There were tribal confederacies also, a classical example of which was the Vijjian confederacy, comprising the Lichchavis, the Videhas and other clans.

---

## MAHAVIRA'S BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE.

The preceding description of Indian society in 6th century B.C. has been given in such detail, for it is only with a full knowledge of that background that a correct evaluation of the noble work and achievements of Mahavira is really possible. Mahavira was born in the year 599 B.C. at Kundagrama, which was a suburb of the flourishing town of Vaisali, about twenty-seven miles north of Patna. His father Siddhartha was apparently the chieftain of the place and his mother, Trisala, was the sister of the Vaisali ruler, whose name has been given in the Jain texts as Chetaka. According to the Jain belief, Mahavira's parents were worshippers of Pārśva and followers of the Śramanas.

### *Tirthankara Parsva.*

There is a Jain tradition that Jainism is as old as the human race, that the religion shall remain in existence till eternity, and that it has been and will be revealed again and again in the endless succeeding periods of the world by innumerable *Tirthankaras*. In each of these periods there are twenty-four Tirthankaras, the first Tirthankara of present age being Rshabha and the last two being Pārśva and Mahavira. Historical research in India was so crude and unorganised at one time that all these Tirthankaras, including Mahavira, were looked upon by the historians of ancient India as just mythical personages. The credit of recognising the historical existence of Mahavira goes, surprisingly enough, to a German scholar in the field of Indology, Professor Herman Jacobi, who made an English translation of the first Jain Anga, Acharanga, and published it with a masterly introduction in the series called the 'Sacred Books of the East' in 1884. Ancient historical research has made some progress since then, and today Indian historians are prepared to

freely recognise not only that Mahavira was a historical personage but also that the twenty-third Tirthankara, Pārśva, and some at least of his predecessors had historical existence.

Pārśva was the son of King Aśvasena of Benares, who belonged to the Ikṣvaku race of the Kshattriyas. In his marital relations he was connected with the royal family of King Prasenjit, whose father Naravarman designated himself as the lord of the universe. It has not been possible so far to historically identify Aśvasena of Benares or Prasenjit and his father Naravarman of Kushasthala; but in spite of that limitation historians have been willing to accept the historicity of Pārśva because of certain other historical and geographical coincidences. The existence of the great *tirtha*, the hill of Samet-Shikhar (which is locally known as the Parsvanatha Hill), on the spot at which the twenty-third Tirthankara attained his final liberation (Nirvana) affords a monumental proof of his historicity. Jain literature, of course, contains numerous references to Parsva and records the facts of his life, but even contemporary Buddhist and other literature affords striking evidence about the existence of *Nirgranthas* before the time of Mahavira.

These *Nirgranthas* or followers of Pārśva were undoubtedly Jain monks; Mahavira himself was referred to as such, and he insisted on calling his followers by the same name. The system preached by Pārśva must have been philosophically founded upon the same presuppositions that mark the present-day Jain *siddhanta*, but it is presumable that it did not quite offer the same pattern of ethical conduct or moral discipline. First, the religion of Pārśva laid down only four vows (चतुर्वर्ग) for the observance of his followers: अहिंसा (non-killing); सुनृत (truthful speech); अस्तेय (non-stealing); and अपरिग्रह (renouncing of all illusory objects); while Mahavira specified, and present day Jainism recognises, five great vows (अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य and अपरिग्रह), the vow of chastity being given

the same status as the vow of *ahimsa*. Jacobi is of the opinion that "the augmentation in the text presupposes a decay of the morals of the monastic order to have occurred between Pārśva and Mahavira." It was possibly a reflection in the domain of social ethics of the newly growing ideas of sanctity of property which marked the rise of economic capitalism in Indian society. Secondly, although it is clear that Pārśva's *sangha* as well as Mahavira's comprehended the monk and the nun, and the layman and the laywoman, the type of distinction between an ordinary layman ( श्रावक ) and a layman who took a special type of दीक्षा and undertook to observe the twelve lay vows ( श्रमणोपासक ), which undoubtedly formed a peculiar feature of Mahavira's *sangha*, did not seem to characterise Pārśva's *sangha* at all. The difference between a श्रावक and a श्रमणोपासक in Mahavira's *sangha* consisted presumably in this, that a Śrāvaka took no definite vows but merely expressed sympathy and his faith as a Jain, while a Śramanopasaka took definite vows : Mahavira drew a distinction between the five great vows ( महाव्रत ) which laid down the practice of right conduct for the ascetic, and the five lesser vows ( अणुव्रत ) which indicated the rules of discipline for the layman and were reinforced by seven more lay vows under which the layman imposed on himself voluntary limitations regarding the areas of his desires, his travel, the things of his daily use, the performance of meditation every day and every month, and the giving of alms to the ascetic. There is an occasional mention of the twelve vows of the *śrāvaka* in Pārśva's *sangha* also, but that appears to be no more than a conventional way of writing, for it is obvious that there could not be twelve—there could be at best only eleven—vows of Pārśva's śrāvakas. What is significant is that Pārśva's system is invariably spoken of as चतुर्दश in the Buddhist and the Jain texts, and such invariable use of the term does not warrant the type of distinction which Mahavira felt impelled to draw between the great and the lesser vows.

*The Jain Idea of Biography.*

It is amazing that historical scholars should have ever been inclined to doubt the existence of Mahavira. Jain literature, particularly Jain canonical literature, which is avowedly older than the classical Sanskrit literature and which vies in its antiquity with the oldest books of the northern Buddhists, is replete with the facts of Mahavira's life. Jacobi is of the view that European scholars were confounded by the similarities between Buddhism and Jainism and between Buddha's and Mahavira's life and that they came to this conclusion due to their lack of study on the subject. The numerous names and appellations by which these two porphets were called Jina, Arhat, Mahavira, Sugata, Savajna, Tathagata, Siddha, Buddha, Sambuddha, Parinivṛta, Mukta, etc., and the fact that both of them were given the same titles and epithets further confused historical scholars. But, as Jacobi has stated, with the exception of Jina and perhaps Śramana, which were quite commonly used by both the sects, the Buddhists and the Jains made a preferential selection of certain titles only. Thus, Buddha, Tatha-gata, Sugata and Sambuddha are common titles of Śākyamuni and are only occasionally used as epithets of Mahavira. On the other hand, Mahāvira is often referred to in the Jain Agama as Vardhamana, because of the 'increase that had taken place in the silver and gold, the intensity of liberality and the popularity of his parents ever since the moment he had been begotten', still more often as Jñātrputra. The Buddhist texts refer to him as Nātaputta, and it was not until quite late that Jacobi identified the term Nātaputta to be a variation of Jñātrputra. He is also called Vīra, Ativīra, Sanmati and by a host of other names in the later literature of the Jains.

These names are clearly qualitative names, that is to say, they are meant to draw attention to certain qualities possessed by Mahavira ; and they are all indicative of a distinct point of view which underlay the



Jain idea of biography. The Jain viewpoint while writing a biography is not that of the usual historical biographer. The Jain interest is not diffused over the whole range of the subject's activities ; it is all centred at one point, and that point is the attainment by his subject of salvation. The Jain biographer writes about other things only in so far as they have to do with the attainment of this ultimate object. Interest would be spread over the whole wide field of activity when a biography, like that of Rama or Krishna, is written with a view to help the codification of the principles of *dharma*. The Brahmanic view, which was based on a desire for success in this world as well as the next and which linked up, in the significant phrase of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, 'the realm of desires with the prospective of the eternal', thought in terms of the *पुरुषार्थ* or human values—*Dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *moksha*—and considered the acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of the present life as worthwhile as the ultimate attainment of the *moksha*. But to the Jain there is no such thing as a real enjoyment of things material.

The Jain *siddhānta* is based upon the presupposition that the whole universe can be classified into one or other of the two everlasting, uncreated, coexisting but independent categories, the *जीव* and the *अजीव*; and the Jain metaphysics proceeds on the assumption that the *Jiva* (which corresponds in general to the *atman* of the other schools of Indian thought) not only exists but that it also acts and is acted upon. The intrinsic nature of the *Jiva* is one of perfection and is characterised by infinite intelligence (*अनन्तज्ञान*), infinite perception (*अनन्तदर्शन*), infinite peace (*अनन्तसुख*) and infinite power (*अनन्तवीर्य*). During the period of the union, however, of the *Jiva* with matter which constitutes *samsāra*, the characteristic features of the *Jiva*'s qualities are obscured, although not destroyed, and 'the exterior semblance of the *Jiva* belies its innate glory'; and from this obscuration it becomes the duty of each individual soul to free itself.

Man's personality in this view consists of two elements, the spiritual and the material ; and according to Jainism, the object of life is so to subdue the latter as to completely shake off its malignant influence and thereby enable the Jiva to reveal all its inherent excellences in their fulness. A man's action in life may be of two kinds, that which maintains, or even strengthens, the bond of union between the Jiva and matter, and thus—whether it brings pleasure or pain to the doer—effectually keeps the Jiva in a state of bondage, and that which tends to cut asunder the union between Jiva and matter and thus helps the Jiva to attain its freedom and ultimately perfection. The first kind of action, and it is just this action which is germane to what we call wordly achievements, is from a spiritual point of view undeserving of very much attention ; and so the Jain biographer, whose main interest is centred on the attainment of the ultimate, has been on the whole inclined to omit it from his analysis. It is only the spiritual activity of the individual about which he has written.

### *Mahavira's Biographies.*

Thus, there is no dearth of biographical material for Mahavira, who holds the honoured position of being the twenty-fourth and last in the galaxy of Tirthankaras of the present age and who is also the ruling personality of the present शासन (patriarchate) ; but this material is primarily and essentially concerned with the details of the spiritual activities of Mahavira. Of the purely material side of his life, the details provided are not many and not sufficiently lucid or specific.

Jacobi is of the opinion that the first book (श्रुतस्कन्ध) of the *Acharanga* sutra and of the *Sutrakritanga* sutra 'may be reckoned among the most ancient parts of the Jain siddhanta'. Their style and metre prove the correctness of this opinion. The date of these Sutras would be somewhere between the Pali literature and

the composition of the *Lalita-vistara*, and has been worked out by Jacobi to be in the 4th century B.C. It is in the first book of the *Acharanga* that the outlines of Mahavira's life appear for the first time, but these outlines have been drawn in a rather rough and limited way. There is no mention here of early or household-er's life at all ; the story begins with Mahavira's 'entry into the order' and goes on to the narration of his daily habits of life as a monk and the numerous penances he went through. The second book of the *Acharanga*, which obviously is a later composition and which does not even fit in with the scheme of writing adopted in the first book, refers possibly, in point of time, to the first part of the 3rd century B.C. when the whole canon was brought together under the patriarchate of Sthulibhadra ; and in this book we can obtain the first glimpse of the detailed account of Mahavira's birth and early life. Certain specific details mentioned here, like the change of embryo, the periodic attendance upon Mahavira of the four orders of Bhavanapati, Vyantara, Jyotishika and Vaimanika gods and goddesses, the enunciation of the five great vows, etc. were described more elaborately and certainly with an element of exaggeration by later writers on the life-history of Mahavira.

The *Kalpa-Sutra*, written and composed by Bhadrabahu I, elaborated upon these details with poetic imagery and in picturesque style and further added to them the new element of the fourteen dreams according to Svetamber and 16 according to Digambara sect—the dreams of (1) an elephant ; (2) a bull ; (3) a lion ; (4) the anointing of the goddess Shri ; (5) a garland ; (6) the moon ; (7) the Sun ; (8) a flag ; (9) a vase ; (10) a lotus lake ; (11) the ocean ; (12) a celestial abode ; (13) a heap of jewels ; and (14) a flame which a Tirthankara's mother was believed to have seen. The final form of Mahavira's life was attained in the *Avasyaka-Niryukti* of Bhadrabahu II, which may be ascribed to the 5th century A. D. and in an anonymously written commentary (चूणि) on it added some time in the 6th or

7th century A. D. These books, however, represent the Śvetāmbara version of Mahavira's life. At the hands of the Digambar ācharyas a somewhat different version was prepared on the basis of पद्मचरित्य, written by Vimala, whose date may be somewhere between the 1st and 3rd century A. D., first in the *Padma-Purāna*, which may be ascribed to the 8th century A. D. and later on by others in various *Purānas*. The Digāmbara version gave the facts of life with the usual and in certain ways with more than usual embellishment, but it differed from the prevailing Śvetāmbara version in one or two major details.

### *Parentage and Birth.*

The first difference between the Śvetāmbara and Digāmbara version relates to the fact of Mahavira's birth. Both versions agree that Mahavira was the son of Siddhartha and Trisala, that he belonged to a clan of the Kshattriyas called Jñātrkas (known as Natikas in the Buddhist works), and that he was a Kashyapa by gotra. But the Svetāmbara version speaks of a transfer of embryo ; the Acharanga says—

“Here, forsooth, in the continent of Jambudvīpa in Bharatvārsha, in the southern part of it, in the Brahmanical part of the place Kundapura, he took the form of an embryo in the womb of Devananda, of the Jalandhrayana gotra, wife of the Brahmana Rishabhadatta, of the gotra of Kodala.....

“Then in the third month of the rainy season, the fifth fortnight, the dark (fortnight) of Āswina, on its thirteenth day, while the moon was in conjunction with Uttaraphalguni, after the lapse of eighty-two days, on the eighty-third day current, the compassionate god (Indra) reflecting on what was the established custom (with regard to the birth of the Tirthankaras), removed the embryo from the southern Brah-

manical part of the place Kundapura to the northern Kshattriya part of the same place, rejecting the unclean matter, lodged the foetus in the womb of Trisala of the Vasishta gotra, wife of the Kshattriya Siddhartha, of the Kashyapa gotra, of the clan of Jnatris, and lodged the foetus of the Kshattriyani Trisala in the womb of Devananda, of the Jalandhrayana gotra.....”

The Digambara account rejects this legend as ‘absurd,’ but the Svetambaras strongly uphold its truth. As the legend is found in the *Acharanga*, the *Kalpa-Sutra*, and many other books it cannot be doubted that it is very old ; but it is not at all clear why it was invented and given such currency. There are, however, in the *Bhagavati*—another sutra in the Svetambara canon, two references that would throw further light on the question and would possibly help us in finding a solution. In *Sataka V Uddesa IV*, in reply to a question regarding the possibility and the procedure of the change of embryo, Mahavira declared that a change of embryo was quite possible and stated his position regarding the procedure by which the change might take place, but significantly omitted to mention—although it would have been quite proper for him in that context to do so—the change of his own embryo. Again, in *Sataka IX, Uddesa XXXIII*, there is reference to the visit to Mahavira’s camp of the Brahmana Rishabhadata and his wife Devananda. On the sight of Mahavira, Devananda had a sudden maternal emotion and milk started coming out of her breast. Asked by his chief disciple Gautama to explain the reason of this unusual occurrence, Mahavira plainly stated that Devananda was his mother. He made no mention whatever of Trisala or of the episode of the change of embryo.

These two references are a pointer to the fact that actually there was no change of Mahavira’s embryo. The *Bhagvati*, which makes a record of the actual con-

versations and sayings of Mahavira; is certainly more trustworthy as a source of information than the *Kalpa-Sutra*, which after all is the work of an acharya, however learned. It is not impossible that the story was invented by the author of the *Kalpa-Sutra* as an occasion to express the prevailing sentiment of contempt for the Brahmanas, and that it was later on embodied in the second book of the *Acharanga*. But that alone does not solve the problem. In the *Bhagawati* Mahavira says that Devananda is his mother and in the *Acharanga* and the *Kalpa-Sutra* the name of Mahavira's mother is given as Kshattriyani Trisala. Of this Professor Jacobi offered a somewhat fanciful solution. "I assume", he said "that Siddhartha had two wives, the Brahmani Devananda, the real mother of Mahavira, and the Kshattriyani Trisala ; for the name of the alleged husband of the former, viz. Rshabhadatta, cannot be very old, because its Prakrit form would in that case probably be Usabhadinna instead of Usabhadatta. Besides, the name is such as could be given to a Jaina only, not to a Brahmana. I, therefore, make no doubt that Rshabhadatta has been invented by the Jains in order to provide Devananda with another husband. Now Siddhartha was connected with persons of high rank and great influence through his marriage with Trisala. It was, therefore, probably thought more profitable to give out that Mahavira was the son, and not merely the stepson, of Trisala, for this reason that he should be entitled to the patronage of her relations." This is obviously far-fetched and also incorrect, for it is certain that in the days of Mahavira the marriage of a Brahmana girl with a Kshattriya was not at all an easy adventure and that anyhow the offspring of such a marriage would not be considered very respectable. What seems more likely is that Devananda was Mahavira's foster-mother. This likelihood finds substantial support in the text of the *Acharanga* (second book) which specifically speaks of Mahavira as having been attended by five nurses, one of them being a wet-nurse.

### *Facts of Early Life.*

The facts of the early life of Mahavira given in the several biographies whose names we have recounted above are very few indeed. The later accounts have connected him with certain anecdotes, myths and miracles ; but they appear to have been culled from the other traditional sources and cannot, therefore, be justifiably recounted as the facts of Mahavira's life. There is, for instance, an anecdote in one of the Digambara books, illustrative of Mahavira's supreme valour, which runs thus : "One day, while playing with his friends in the garden of his father, Mahavira saw an elephant, which was mad with fury with juice flowing from his temples, rushing towards him. His companions, all boys, shocked and frightened on the sight of the impending danger, deserted their comrade and ran away. Without losing a moment, Mahavira made up his mind to face the danger squarely, went towards the elephant, caught hold of his trunk with his strong hands and mounted his back at once"

It is nevertheless a fact that the Jains never attempted to give a connected account of the life of this great Master as the Buddhists gave a life of the Buddha in the *Mahavagga*, from the obtainment of Enlightenment to the admission of Sariputta and Moggallana into the order and in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, which recounts the events of Buddha's last days. The *Kalpa-Sutra* used a somewhat conventional style while writing about the great rejoicings that took place in the family and the town on the birth of Mahavira, about the illumination of the streets, about the liberation of prisoners, and about the performance of numerous other charitable deeds. At the core of much that is conventional, however, a few facts would seem to clearly emerge. In person Mahavira seems to have been handsome and impressive ; all descriptions agree on that point. The several names by which he is called in the Jain books Vira, Ativira, Mahavira, etc, all clearly indicate that the chief quality of his character was courage and

valour. Being the scion of a Kshattriya chieftain and brought up in the free atmosphere of a republican society, he must have right from his childhood taken the most vigorous interest in outdoor games and martial exercises. He was naturally intelligent and possessed of a very keen intellect. The *kalpa-Sutra* mentions that from his very birth he possessed 'supreme, unlimited and unimpeded knowledge and intuition' and that he had the aspirations of a man of knowledge. That his education was carefully looked after may be safely presumed : the Jain scriptures speak again and again of princes who were trained in "the seventy-two arts," the list including dancing, music, gambling, rules of society, fighting, archery, knowledge of birds, animals and trees, etc. besides purely literary and philosophical attainments.

The Svetambara books say that Mahavira had an elder brother, whose name was Nandivardhana, with whom he lived in his boyhood. This fact is omitted, but not positively denied, by Digambara books. Both books, however, agree that Mahavira was very well-connected. By birth he was a member of at least the ruling class in a republican democracy. The description of his father's palace and the dimensions of rejoicings made there on the birth of Mahavira, who according to the Svetambara version was only a second son, would lead one to the conclusion that Siddhartha was a ruling prince. Jacobi, however, does not feel inclined to that view. According to him, Kundagrama (or Kundalpura) was "a halting place of caravans, an insignificant place and an outlying village and a suburb of Vaisali, the capital of Videha", so that Siddhartha was only "a petty chief, a baron, no king, nor even the head of his clan, but only a landowner, and exercised only the degree of authority which in the East usually falls to the share of one belonging to the recognised aristocracy of the country." Such description is belied by later historical research. Historians are now prepared to accept that Kundagrama was the head-



quarters of the Jñātrka Kshattriyas, "who were already known for their piety and non-violence, and abstention from sin and meat-eating," and that the republic was governed by an assembly of elders, one of whom assumed the position of the president. It is presumable that Siddhartha occupied the position of the president of this republic; for otherwise it might be somewhat difficult to explain his marriage with the sister of Chetaka, whom even Jacobi recognises as 'the powerful king of Videha,' belonging to the Lichchavi sect of the Kshattriyas. Through the wife, Siddhartha—and following him, Mahivira—was related to the ruling dynasty of Magadha and the dynasties of Sauvira, Anga, Vatsa (Vamsa) and Avanti. Chetaka had seven daughters, one of whom became a nun, but the other six were married in one or the other royal family of Eastern India. The youngest Chelana became the wife of Srenika (Bimbisara), king of Magadha; one Prabhavati was married to King Udayana of Vitabhya, which has been identified at various places in Jain literature with a town in Sindhu-Sauvira country; another Padmavati was married to King Dadhivahana of Champa, the capital of Anga; Mrgavati was married to King Satanika of Kausambhi, the capital of Vatsa; and Siva was married to Chanda Pradyota of Ujjaini, which was the capital of Avanti. That the tie of these relationships was real and strong, may be judged from the fact that the books are always very particular in stating the names and gotras of all relations of Mahavira, although they have recorded little further information about them.

From the above it is clear that the environment in which Mahavira grew up was necessarily royal atmosphere tempered with healthy influence of a republican character. His maternal relatives were practically all of them ruling princes, but his father was a republican chief and even his maternal uncle was a territorial ruler under the auspices of a republican confederacy—the famous Vajji confederacy of which eight

republics, including the Videhas, the Jñātrkas, the Lichchavis and the Vajjis, were constituent units. The real strength of the republic in Mahavira's time as, to a large extent, today lay not so much in its government as in the character of its people. The Buddha mentioned in one of his discourses that republican population was free from luxury and sloth, 'sleeping on logs of wood as pillows and not on cushions of the finest cotton, active in archery, and not delicate, tender and soft in their arms and legs.' The youths were rowdy, but by no means devoid of honour or lacking in moral courage ; they frankly admitted their mistakes, and were inspired by a fundamental sense of respect for elders and women, and their national institutions. It was in this atmosphere that Mahavira's early life was spent. His upbringing must have been quite exceptionally balanced and his development proportionate, for his life was a life of comfort but not luxury, and his ambition was an ambition to conquer but not with a view to mastery over others. He was deeply influenced by the democratic ethos of the society in which he lived. He was impressed by the inadequate application of this ethos in the political, economic and social life of the community without its being based upon a really democratic religious system ; and he took it upon himself to work out and propagate a system of complete spiritual democracy in the form of Jainism.

---

## PERIOD OF PREPARATION.

### *Mahavira's Natural Bent of Mind.*

All biographies of Mahavira are agreed upon one point, namely, that he led the life of a householder for thirty years. With what mental attitude this period of life was lived, of that we have no certain knowledge. Certain Digambara books suggest that Mahavira lived his life as a householder in a normal manner, taking a healthy interest in his environment and enjoying the many opportunities of work and play afforded to him by his exalted station in society, until all of a sudden in his thirtieth year he began to reflect and meditate and feeling dissatisfied with the prospect of an 'unending mundane existence' made up his mind to renounce the world. The Svetambara accounts, on the other hand, depict Mahavira as having been an unusually reflective lad from the very beginning. Even in his early youth he seems to have thought of renouncing the world, but he was always prevailed upon by his affectionate parents to change his resolve. Nor did Mahavira desire to hurt his parents, if he could help it. It appears that Mahavira's parents were quite assiduous in making attempts to engage the boy's mind in worldly things and in creating around him a luscious atmosphere of amusement and pleasure. Fairly early in life he was married to a charming princess, Yashoda, belonging to the Kaundinya gotra.

On the question of Mahavira's marriage there is a fundamental difference of detail between the Digambara and Svetambara accounts. While the Svetambara books distinctly mention that Mahavira lived married life for about 10 years and begot a daughter named Anojja or Priyadarsana, the Digambara books deny the fact of marriage altogether. But from a critical study of the several old biographies of Mahavira, it is possible to establish that the Digambara view is based

upon a misconstruction of certain verses in the *Paumachariya* and *Avasyaka Niryukti*. These books give in a comparative form the various details about the life of the Tirthankaras ; with reference to their status at the time of renunciation these books mention that while the other Tirthankaras renounced the world after having been actual rulers over their states, Vasupujya (the 12th Tirthankara), Malli (the 19th Tirthankara), Nemi (the 22nd Tirthankara), Parsva (the 23rd Tirthankara), and Mahavira were still कुमार (i.e. princes).

मल्ली अरिदुनेमी पासो वीरो य वासुपुज्जो ॥५७॥

एए कुमारसोहा गेहाओ निगया जिणवरिन्दा ।

सेसा वि हु रायाणो पुहई भोत्तूण निक्खन्ता ॥५८॥

पउमचरिय ० ० ।

वीरं अरिदुनेमि पासं मल्लि च वासुपुज्जं च ।

एए मुत्तूण जिणे अवसेसा आसि रायाणो ॥२२१॥

रायकुलेसु वि जाया विमुद्वंसेसु सत्तियकुलेसु ।

न य इच्छियाभिसेवा कुमारवासम्मि पव्वइया ॥२२२॥

आवश्यकनिर्युक्ति ।

The same couplets, in Sanskrit, have been repeated in the Digambara books such as *Padma-Purana* and *Harivamsa-Purana*.

वासुपूज्यो महावीरो मल्लिः पार्श्वो यदुत्तमः ।

कुमारा निर्गता गेहात् पृथिवीपतयोऽपरे ॥

पद्मपुराण २०. ६७ ।

निष्क्रान्तिर्वासुपूज्यस्य मल्लेर्नेमिजिनान्त्ययोः ।

पञ्चानां तु कुमाराख्यां राज्ञां शेषजिनेशिताम् ॥

हरिवंशपुराण ६०. २१४ ।

It is clear that the word कुमार in these verses has been interpreted in its other meaning of 'celibate' by the later Digambara acharyas\*; but it is also obvious

\* It seems necessary to point out in this connection that the same interpretation has been accepted in a passage in the *Samavayanga*, a sutra in the Svetambara canon. As this is a solitary instance of such construction in the whole Svetambara literature, it points to the influence of the prevailing Digambara tradition and should help us to determine the date of the present text of this particular Sutra. The passage reads एगूणवीसं तित्थयरा अगारवास-मज्जे वसित्ता मुण्डे भवित्ता णं अगाराओ अणगारिअं पव्वइया-समवायांग-१९.

that this meaning will not possibly bear in the context. There is no particular reason in these circumstances to disbelieve the facts of Mahavira's marriage. It is possible, however, that the marriage when made was against his own inclination and desire and was made in deference to the wishes of the parents ; but that he lived a married life for several years and became father seems to be well-founded.

The Digambara and Svetambara versions differ also on another point, whether in the thirtieth year of Mahavira's life when he actually renounced the world his parents were alive or dead. The Svetambara accounts mention that Mahavira had made a promise to his mother that he would not renounce the world so long as the parents were alive. This would seem to follow quite logically from what has been said before about Mahavira's leaning towards ascetic life and the parent's objection to his renouncing the world and taking up an ascetical career and from the further fact that Mahavira was naturally a dutiful and considerate son, although strong in his determination at the same time. The story goes that Mahavira's parents died when he was in his twenty-eighth year, that 'perceiving that the time of his renunciation had come' he repeated his desire to enter the Order to his elder brother who was now the eldest member of the family, and that the brother dissuaded him from acting on that desire forthwith, for "the deaths of our parents are still fresh in our memories, your leaving us at this time would render our bereavement the more unbearable and painful." Mahavira lived for two years more in the palace and then 'with the consent of those in power entered the spiritual career'. The Digambara books, on the other hand, mention that Mahavira's parents were alive at the time when he renounced the world, that they tried

---

On the other hand, a Digambara text 'हरिवंशपुराण' admits that Mahavira was engaged to Yashodara, but says that he was obstinate in his refusal and that therefore the proposal had to be dropped.

first to dissuade him from his resolve but yielded in the end when they found that Mahavira was definitely bent upon executing it.

### *Renunciation.*

Be that as it may, the fact remains that disgusted with the non-finality of the things of the world and persuaded by a desire to search for the ultimate Truth, on the tenth day of Magsir Mahavira formally renounced all his secular bonds, left his silver, gold and riches, quitted and rejected his real, valuable property, distributed his wealth in presents, set out for the life of a homeless monk. The great event has been somewhat poignantly described in the Kalpa-Sutra.

“In that period, in that age, in the first month of winter, in the first fortnight, in the dark (fortnight) of Margasiras, on its tenth day, when the shadow had turned towards the east and the (first) Paurushi was full and over, on the day called Suvrata, in the Muhurta called Vijaya, in the palanquin Chandraprabha, Mahavira was followed on his way by a train of gods, men, and Asuras, and surrounded by a swarm of shell-blowers, proclaimers, pattivalas, courtiers, men carrying others on the back, heralds, and bell bearers. They praised and hymned him with kind, pleasing, sweet and soft words.....

“Then the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira—gazed on by a circle of thousands of eyes, praised by a circle of thousands of mouths, extolled by a circle of thousands of hearts, being the object of many thousands of wishes, desired because of his splendour, beauty, and virtues, pointed out by a circle of thousands of forefingers, answering with (a greeting) of his hands a circle of thousands of jointed hands of thousands of men and women, passing along a row of thousands, of palaces, greeted by sweet and delightful music, as beating of time, performance

on the Vina, Turya, and the great drum, in which joined shouts of victory, and the low and pleasing murmur of the people ; accompanied by all his pomp, all his splendour, all his army, all his train, by all his retinue, by all his magnificence, by all his grandeur, by all his ornaments, by all the tumult, by all the throng, by all subjects, by all actors, by all time-beaters, by the whole seraglio ; adorned with flowers, scented robes, garlands, and ornaments, and under the continuous din and sound of trumpets, with great state and splendour, with a great train of soldiers, vehicles, and guests, under the sound, din, and noise of conches, cymbals, drums, castanets, horns, small drums, kettle drums, Muajas, Mridangas, and Dundubhis, which were accompanied at the same time by trumpets—went right through Kundapura to a park called the Shandavana of the Jñātrikas and proceeded to the excellent tree Asoka. There under the excellent tree Asoka he caused his palanquin to stop, descended from his palanquin, took off his ornaments, garlands, and finery with his own hands, and with his own hands plucked out his hair in five handfuls. When the moon was in conjunction with the asterism Uttaraphalguni, he after fasting two and a half days without drinking water, put on a divine robe, and quite alone, nobody else being present, he tore out his hair and leaving the house entered the state of houselessness.”

### *The Ascetic Life.*

Mahavira's ascetic life before his attainment of the highest spiritual knowledge lasted for more than twelve years. Since his parents were lay disciples of the order of Pārśva, it would be justified to infer that he began his novitiate as an ascetical member of the same

Order. At the same time it appears that he did not abide rigorously by all the specified rules of the Order : there is a tradition current in Jain literature that a Tirthankara does not adopt a *giri* and, presumably, the prevailing practice of an earlier Tirthankara's Order. There seems to be no doubt that the monks of Parsva's order wore clothes. In the *Uttaradhyayana* sutra there is an account of a meeting between Kesi, a young Sramana of the school of Parsva, and Gautama, the chief disciple of Mahavira, in which 'knowledge and virtuous conduct were for ever brought to eminence and subjects of the greatest importance were settled'. The matter that had been occasioning controversy was that Parsva's law recognised only four vows and permitted the wearing by the monks of an under and an upper garment, while Mahavira's law enjoined five vows and forbade the wearing of clothes altogether ; and Gautama explained away the difficulty by stating that 'the various outward marks of religious men introduced to distinguish them do not count towards final liberation but only knowledge, faith and right conduct. In conformity with the rules of Parsva's order, Mahavira also wore clothes for a year and a month, but then adopted nudity and stuck to it throughout the rest of his life. The Digambara tradition credits him with having adopted nudity from the start.

His habits of life during this period may be briefly mentioned. He went about naked and without any outfit of any kind. He did not even possess a bowl for collecting food which he collected in the hollow of his hands. He completely neglected his body and abandoned care of it. Many insects crawled on his person, bit him and caused him pain, but he bore it with patience. People were shocked at the sight of him ; they shouted at him and at time even struck him. He bore everything patiently and with equanimity. For days and months he would observe silence and remain absorbed in his own thoughts. The Digambara tradition mentions that he observed the



vow of silence for twelve years, but that is possibly an exaggeration. He avoided men as well as women, often gave no answers to questions put to him and omitted to return greetings. Diversions of all kind he positively avoided. The ascetic life of Mahavira strongly contrasted with the probationary period in Buddha's life. The Buddha created an agreeable impression wherever he went; he was welcomed by teachers like Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta and their pupils, and even when he followed a graduated course of austerities and consequently reduced himself to a mere skeleton, skin and bone, he did not arouse the hostility of the onlooker. Mahavira's troubles were partly due to his unkempt appearance and partly to his sombre silence and look of grim determination. Not without justification do the Jain accounts say that unusually large for a Tirthankara was Mahavira's share of the defilement of Karma which he had to suppress before obtaining enlightenment.

### *Penances.*

Mahavira performed a very prolonged course of of severe penance for twelve years for the destruction of the karma. This course of penances comprehended 'uninterrupted meditation, unbroken chastity, and the most scrupulous observance of the rules concerning eating and drinking.' The account of his *sadhana* given in the Acharanga is literally soul-stirring.

He meditated day and night, undisturbed and unperturbed. Avoiding women and giving up the company of householders, he realised singleness. He lodged in workshops, assembling places, manufactories, sheds of straw, towns, garden-houses, in cemeteries and burial grounds, or at the foot of a tree, wherever shelter was available. He did not care for sleep for the sake of pleasure and slept only for short hours. In winter when cold winds blew, he did not seek sheltered places or kindle wood or seek to cover himself with clothes. In the cold season he meditated in the shade, in summer

he exposed himself to the heat. He would meditate with his eyes fixed on a square space before him of the length of a man or in some other posture without the smallest motion. While meditating he would concentrate on the things above, below, or beside. He meditated free from sin and desire, not attached to sounds or colours, and never acted carelessly. Being averse from the impressions of the senses, he spoke very little and was always calm.

‘Thoroughly knowing the earth-bodies and water bodies and fire-bodies and wind-bodies, the lichens, seeds and sprouts’ and comprehending ‘that they are, if narrowly inspected, imbued with life’, he avoided all kinds of sin and abstained from all sinful activity. He did not use what had expressly been prepared for him. He did not use another’s robe, nor did he eat out of another’s vessel. He did not rub his eyes or scratch his body. ‘Knowing measure in eating and drinking, he was not desirous of delicious food, nor had he a longing for it.’ For more than a couple of years he led a religious life without using cold water. He completely abstained from indulgence of the flesh ; whether wounded or not, he took no medical treatment. He lived on rough food—rice, pounded jujube and beans. Sometimes he ate stale food. He accepted moist or dry or cold food, old beans, old pap, or bad grain, whatever was available. But where there were hungry crows or thirsty beings or other beggars standing in his way, he would go past that place without begging alms. He kept fasts ; sometimes he ate only the sixth meal, or the eighth, or the tenth, or the twelfth ; sometimes he did not drink for half a month or even for a month or for more than two months or even six months.

In accordance with the rules of the order he wandered about unceasingly, except for the four months of the rainy season. During the rest of the year, he lived in villages only a single night and in towns only five nights. He was indifferent alike to the smell of ordure and the sweet scent of sandal, to straw and jewel,

dirt and gold, pleasure and pain, this world and the world beyond, to life and death. His mind was completely free from attachment. Circumspect in his thought, words and acts, he moved without wrath, pride, deceit and greed. Like water in a vessel, he was unattached in the midst of sin. During the course of his travels, he visited the pathless country of the Ladhas, in Vajjabhumi and in Subbbhabhumi ; and here his troubles were endless. The rude natives of the place attacked him and set dogs to bite him, but he did not use as much as a stick to keep off the dogs. He endured the abusive language of the rustics and bore pain, free from desire. "When he approached the village the inhabitants met him on the outside and attacked him, saying 'Get away from here'. He was struck with a stick, the fist, a lance, hit with a fruit, a clod, a potsherd. Beating him again and again, many cried. When he once sat without moving his body, they cut his flesh, tore his hair under pains, or covered him with dust. Throwing him up they let him fall, or disturbed him in his religious postures". But like a hero at the head of a battle, bearing all hardships he proceeded on his path wholly undisturbed.

### *His Wanderings :*

The Jain books give a precise description of Mahavira's wanderings during this period of over twelve years, the various places he visited and the several contacts he formed. The *Kalpa-Sutra* and the *Bhagavati* supplement, and do not as certain scholars are inclined to think contradict, each other ; and together help to frame a complete picture of his travels from place to place.

Kummara may be supposed to be the starting point of Mahavira's travels. The *Acharanga* mentions that renunciation implied the quitting of 'the northern Kshattriya part of the place Kundapura' and arrival in the village Kummara, which was presumably a suburb of Kundagrama. From Kummara he moved on to the

settlement of Kollaga (situated close to Nalanda), where he was hospitably received by the Brahmana Bahula. After roaming about in that area for some six months, Mahavira ultimately came to Asthigrama to spend his first rainy season (ऋतुमसि) there. The commentary on the Kalpa-Sutra refers to Vardhamana as the former name of Asthigrama; Dr. B. C. Law is inclined to identify it with modern Burdwan. On the way to Asthigrama Mahavira had the first taste of those bitter experiences, which were going to be such a common feature of his *Sadhaka* life, (i) of hostility towards him of the other parivrajaka sects living in north India at the time, and (ii) of his persecution at the hands of various tempter-gods in a similar way to the temptation of the Buddha by the traditional Mara. On both these a few words may be parenthetically added.

In 6th century B.C. north India generally and the north-eastern provinces in particular were buzzing with ascetic life. A whole legion of ascetic orders was flourishing in these regions. Scholars are of the opinion that asceticism has its roots in the Vedas; the centre of Vedic religion is the *Rishi* (seer) who is capable of a direct realisation of Truth by practice of तपस् or asceticism. There is no doubt that asceticism received great encouragement in the age of the Aranyakas and the Upanishads when, dissatisfied with growing ritualism and superstition under the aegis of the priestly class, serious-minded people openly questioned the prevailing intellectualism of religion and retired to the forests in their search for the highest knowledge and for a new world of experience. The *Śruti* practice of asceticism was accordingly regularised into a system in the *Smritis*, which made it obligatory upon every Hindu to devote the latter part of his life to the two ashramas of *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa*. It may be mentioned that the Brahmanical system did not confine asceticism only to elderly people or advanced householders; even youths could be permitted to take up the ascetical career, if they wanted to shun the world in their quest for the

Ideal, such youths being known as the नैष्ठिक ब्रह्मचारी. Thus in the normal Brahmanical system quite about half of society would be wandering about as mendicants and ascetics in pursuit of Truth under the guidance of chosen teachers. This floating mass of houseless population was organised into different orders or sects in accordance with the different systems of doctrines and discipline they followed. The Buddhist text *Udanam* bears testimony to the fact that the characteristic feature of the religious life of India during this period was a multiplicity of ascetic groups, "sectaries of Sramanas and Brahmanas, all parivrajakas, followers of different *ditthis* (viewpoints), दर्शन (system), धान्ति (beliefs), रुचि (aims), and आश्रय (organisations)"; the Jain texts also mention numerous sects and schools, with their own beliefs and practices, existing in the country at the time. In his introduction to the *Acharanga*, Jacobi has elaborately compared the rules and religious practices of Brahmanic and Sramanic ascetics, and stated his conclusion that certain rules were commonly observed by most of the ascetic orders, for instance, (1) the injunction that the Bhikshu must station himself in a fixed retreat during the rains, (2) the injunction that the Bhikshu must not store up articles of consumption, nor kill life, and (3) various rules regarding beggings etc. *Tapas* (or austerities), in some form or other, it appears, was common to particularly all orders. But Mahavira was now giving a new meaning to the term, which conflicted with all its prevailing notions and which raised the practice of तपस् to a spiritual height, unattained and not even intended to be attained, by any of the existing *parivrajaka* orders.

Mahavira's idea of *tapas* was that of संवर or practice of self restraint with regard to the body, speech and mind ; in his view, austerities had to be inward as well as outward, and fasting, absolute chastity and unmitigated meditation were its several forms. The practice of austerities or penances was to be resorted to as a means of wearing out and ultimately destroying the

effect of sinful deeds committed in former existences, and the practice of the threefold self-restraint, of the body, speech and mind, as a means of stopping the production of new Karma. As justified forms of penances, Mahavira was prepared to recognise only अनशन (fasting), ऊणोदरी (limiting the food that one eats), भिक्षाचर्या (eating only begged food), रसपरित्याग (abstaining from special items of food which one most enjoys), कायक्लेश (bodily austerity), प्रतिसंलीनता avoidance of temptation by control of senses and mind), प्रायश्चित्त (confession and penance), विनय (reverence), वैयावृत्य (service rendered to the aged and the helpless), स्वाध्याय (the study of the scriptures), ध्यान (meditation), कायोत्सर्ग (feeling and showing absolute indifference to the body and its needs). He gave no honoured place to practices like the tending of a fire; the exorcising of evil spirits; the performance of *agnihotras*; the taking of regular baths; the living under water, or in caves, or on trees; the eating of roots, leaves, moss, flowers, or bark of trees, or of grass; the besmearing of body with ashes, etc., just the practices in which the other *parivrajaka* orders had gloried. It appears that Parsva's monks had been fairly lax in their morals and discipline, but they were far more regulated in their conduct than the other *parivrajakas*, for there is an occasional mention in the Jain texts of the weaker spirits in Parsva's order finding it hard to observe the rules and consequently joining the other *parivrajaka* sects with less rigorous rules of discipline. But it is certain that the austerities prescribed by Mahavira for himself, and later on for the members of his Order, presented an infinitely harder code of penances and were combined with a far more rigorous discipline of ethical and spiritual conduct than was prevalent in any *parivrajaka* sect at that time; and there is no doubt that Mahavira earned the hostility of the other sects for doing so.

As regards the persecution of Mahavira by the tempter-gods, it is a reminder of the story of Mara in Buddha's life. Mara is looked upon in Buddhist literature as the supreme lord of all evil, the chief seducer

to evil thought, word and deed. He is supposed to have followed the Buddha step by step and watched for a moment of weakness to over-power his soul and deflect him from the pursuit of knowledge. As a god of evil he is not associated with that gloomy tragedy with which we are accustomed to fancy the diabolical, deadly foe of good surrounded ; and as seducer his methods of work are fairly commonplace, 'appearing at one time as a Brahmin, at another as a husbandman, at another as an elephant king, and in many other different forms' in order to shake Buddha's life. Instead of the traditional Mara, however, Jain books speak of different gods appearing at different times and the methods of their attack are not always non-violent as in the case of Mara, but comprehend elaborate bodily pain and torture. The first encounter with the tempter-god in Mahavira's life took place on the eve of his first *चतुर्मास*. While on the way to Asthigrama, he came across a small temple dedicated to the god Shulpani, which used to be left completely untenanted at night but where Mahavira decided to stay and meditate. He suffered frightful tortures at the hands of the god in the course of his meditation at night. But the real battle with temptations took place in the eleventh year of his *sadhak* life, when Sangamaka, another tempter-god, set about his task with a view to confuse Mahavira and, if possible, to shake him from his search for Truth, followed him step by step for a period of six months giving him all sorts of torture and creating all conceivable difficulties in his way in order to overpower his soul in a moment of weakness. Adopting the garb of a disciple of Mahavira, he started committing theft in a house, got caught, put the blame upon his guru and had him severely beaten. He had Mahavira arrested on suspicion of being a spy. Several times he made Mahavira's excursions for alms fruitless by various devices ; he had him ridiculed by people with derisive gestures ; and gave him troubles in a hundred other ways. But Mahavira remained steadfast, bore all his trials with fortitude, and therefore the god was ultimately obliged to depart.

*Gosala Mankhaliputra :*

Mahavira's second चतुर्मास was spent in Nalanda, a suburb of Rajgrha. While here he was met by Gosala Mankhaliputta (or Maskariputra), the Ajivaka teacher. Gosala was then wandering about in the country showing pictures to the people, and was attracted by Mahavira owing to his extraordinary self-restraint and impressive habits of meditation and by the fact that a rich householder of Rajgrha, by name Vijaya, had shown respect and hospitality towards Mahavira. Possibly another factor, Mahavira's capacity to prophesy things correctly, also helped to increase Gosala's keenness, as it certainly helped towards the diffusion of Mahavira's influence and following in the later part of his career. The Jain books mention that Gosala approached Mahavira with a request that he may be adopted as his disciple, but that Mahavira declined his request, presumably because he at once sensed the great difference between their temperaments. Gosala's request was repeated on two later occasions and on each successive occasion with greater earnestness, and was ultimately granted by Mahavira. It appears that from this time onwards, Mahavira and Gosala lived and travelled together for a period of six years. The third and the fourth चतुर्मास were spent at Champa, at different quarters of the same town. After the fourth चतुर्मास for a short period, they seem to have trekked into the Ladha country, which they visited again in the ninth year. The fifth and the sixth चतुर्मास were spent at Bhaddila, the capital town of the Mallas ; the seventh at a place in the kingdom of Magadha ; and the eighth at Rajagrha. In the ninth year Mahavira travelled again into the Ladha-desa and stayed there for over six months ; in the absence of any settled retreat to spend the rainy season he had to wander about during the period. Presumably Gosala was with him this time also, although the fact that no incidents are mentioned of his use of his undeniably harsh tongue during the sojourn in Ladha-desa is somewhat remarkable. On return from Ladha country, while they were



travelling from Kumaragram to Siddharthagrama, they met the ascetic Vesayana, who was seated with upraised arms and upturned face in the glare of the Sun while his body was swarming with lice. Gosala jestingly and indiscreetly asked whether this man was a sage or a bed of lice. Provoked at this, Vesayana attempted to strike Gosala with his supernormal powers, but was shielded by Mahavira. Gosala, however, was so impressed with the fact of the possession of supernormal powers that he felt inclined to give up Mahavira's company and to devote all his energies to the practice of the severest penances with a view to acquire fiery powers for himself. It took him six months to acquire these powers, and after that he proclaimed himself a Jina and founded the order of the Ajivikas.

On the Gosala episode, the opinions of the scholars are very different and highly conflicting. Gosala figures in the early tradition of Buddhism as an independent leader of thought, "the head of an order, of a following, the teacher of a school, well known and of repute as a sophist.....a man of experience who has long been a recluse"; there is no suggestion made of his personal relation with Mahavira. From the point of view of thought and belief, the Jain and the Ajivaka sects are undoubtedly allied, having many points in common between them. In the immediate background of both were the teachings of Parsva, Parsva being honoured by both as the last but one Tirthankara, while Mahavira and Gosala were sharply divided in their claim to the position of the last Tirthankara. The eight *Mahanimittas* of the Ajivaka canon were in fact extracts made from the *Ten Purvas*; which are recognised as the literary authority of the sect of Parsva. The commonness of their tradition and the fact that Gosala proclaimed himself a Jina and was recognised as a teacher at least two years before Mahavira, were considered by Jacobi and Barua as adequate reasons for advancing the somewhat fanciful opinion that contrary to the Jain account Mahavira was a disciple of Gosala.

for some time. Such an opinion is clearly unfounded for if Gosala had ever been Mahavira's teacher, it is presumable that the Buddhist texts would have at least recorded something to that effect, and anyhow Gosala would have put forward that claim when he visited Mahavira to upbraid him for calling him his own disciple. Thus, even if the *Bhagavati* version of the relationship between Mahavira and Gosala be not accepted, a reversal of that relationship cannot surely be accepted at all. That the *Bhagavati* account may be somewhat exaggerated is warranted by the fact that neither in the Acharanga nor in the *Kalpa-Sutra* is there any mention of Gosala. It may also be mentioned that the Digambara accounts of Mahavira's life also do not refer to his contact with Gosala. What appears on the basis of available materials to be well-founded is that Mahavira and Gosala did not have a teacher and disciple relationship at all. It is highly doubtful that Mahavira had started taking disciples before his attainment of Enlightenment. Mahavira and Gosala were just two associates in a common concern, two sadhakas who lived together for six years in asceticism. Later on there sprang up acute differences of opinion between the two. They separated from each other and became irreconcilable opponents, fighting out their differences generally through their followers.

## ENLIGHTENMENT

After Gosala's withdrawal, Mahavira continued his wanderings and practice of asceticism alone. Gosala proclaimed himself a Jina and started collecting followers after acquiring supernormal powers ; but Mahavira persisted in his search. From Siddharthagrama he went to Vaisali and thence to Vanijyagrama, where he was visited by Ananda, a wealthy merchant of the place ; and then travelled to Śravastī (which has been identified with Sahet-Mahet on the south bank of the river Tapti) for his tenth चतुर्मास.

On the expiry of the tenth चतुर्मास began the sad episode of sangamaka, the temper-god, who made his appearance and began his attack which in its various forms lasted for about six months. The eleventh चतुर्मास was spent at Vaisali and the twelfth at Champa. The interval between the eleventh and the twelfth was marked by the famous अभिगृह at Kausambi, which took five months and twenty-five days to be fulfilled and meant a forced fast for Mahavira of this duration. "During the thirteenth year, in the second month of summer, in the fourth fortnight, the light (fortnight) of Vaisakha, on its tenth day, called Suvrata, in the Muhurta called Vijaya, while the moon was in conjunction with the asterism Uttara-phalguni, when the shadow had turned towards the east and the first wake was over, outside the town Jambhikagrama, on the northern bank of the river Rjupalika, in the field of the householder Samaga, under a Sala tree, in a squatting position with joint heels exposing himself to the heat of the Sun, with the knees high and the head low, in deep meditation, in the midst of abstract meditation, he reached the complete and full, the unobstructed, unimpeded, infinite and supreme, best knowledge and intuition, called Kevala."

*Kevalin.*

On the attainment of Kevala jnana, says the Kalpa-Sutra, the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira became omniscient. "He knew and saw all conditions of the worlds, of gods, men and demons ; whence they came, whither they are born as men or animals or became gods or hellish, beings, the ideas, the thoughts of their mind, the food, doings, desires, the open and secret deeds of all the livings in the whole world ; the Arhat, for whom there is no secret, knew and saw all conditions of all living beings in the world, what they thought, spoke, or did at any time." It is notable that frequently in the course of audience and in his preachings after this great event he would refer to the earlier existence of a person or to what one was going to be in the next birth; this extended vision of the past, present and future became obviously an essential attribute of Mahavira's personality. Even the Buddhist texts always refer to him as possessing such vision.

It would be helpful in this connection to understand the Jain theory of knowledge. According to Jainism, consciousness (उपयोग) is the very essence of the soul, not a mere characteristic of it. The soul (जीव) can know unaided everything direct and exactly as it is. Of consciousness, there are two manifestations, perception (दर्शन) and knowledge (ज्ञान). The former is simple apprehension, the latter conceptual knowledge. In the former details are not perceived, in the latter they are; दर्शन is a perception of generalities (सामान्य) of things without particularities (विशेष). There can be no jiva without consciousness or cognition, as there can be no consciousness without a jiva. Incidentally, this is a point which illustrates the distinction of Jainism from Buddhism, where not the mind but only states of consciousness are admitted as real. The fact that the Knowledge which a jiva actually has is fragmentary in its character is due to the obscuration caused by Karma, which interferes with its power of cognition. The

Karmas which obscure the different kind of jñāna are called the knowledge-obscuring (ज्ञानावरण), those which obscure the different varieties of दर्शन are called the perception-obscuring (दर्शनावरण) karmas. The different kinds of jñana recognised by Jainism are : (1) मतिज्ञान which is ordinary cognition obtained by normal means of sense perception. It includes remembrance (स्मृति), recognition (प्रत्यभिज्ञा), induction based upon observation (तर्क), and deductive reasoning (अनुमान) and it is acquired by means of the senses and mind; (2) श्रुत or testimony, i.e., knowledge derived through signs, symbols, or words; (3) अवधि which is direct knowledge of things even at a distance of time and space. It is knowledge by clairvoyance, limited by and coextensive with the material object of the knowledge; (4) मनःपर्यय which is direct knowledge of the thoughts of others, a telepathic knowledge of others' minds; and (5) केवल which is perfect knowledge comprehending all substances and their modifications. The last three categories of knowledge are direct in the sense that they are derived without the medium of senses and mind.

दर्शन or perception is of four kinds; perception through visual sensations (चक्षुर्दर्शन), perception through non-visual sensations (अचक्षुर्दर्शन), perception through the faculty of Avadhi or clairvoyance (अवधिदर्शन), and lastly केवल दर्शन perception through Kevala or infinite perception, which is unlimited and apprehends all general reality.

All accounts of Mahavira's life are agreed that he possessed a highly active and clever mind from the very beginning. He is mentioned to have possessed from his very childhood the *Mati*, *Sruta* and *Avadhi* jñāna; the Svetambara books say that he was in possession of *Abhogika-jnana*, which is inferior to the Avadhi knowledge but is essentially of the same class. मनःपर्यय he obtained while renouncing the world and adopting the career of an ascetic. The Kalpa-Sutra refers to his having perceived with 'his supreme unlimited knowledge and

intuition' that the time of his renunciation had come. Now he came to acquire *Kevala-jnana*, *Kevala-darsana*, and approximation to the perfect condition of the soul. Perfect knowledge is completely free from doubt (संशय), perversity (विपर्यय), and indefiniteness (अनव्यवसाय). It is absolute apprehension without media, 'soul-knowledge,' knowledge *par excellence* which is higher than all the other varieties of normal and super-normal knowledge. Such knowledge, of course, comprehends knowledge of the soul itself, for contrary to the Nyaya-Vaisesika theory which believes that knowledge reveals only extrenal relations but not itself, the Jain siddhanta asserts that in knowing any object the soul knows itself simultaneously. After the attainment of *Kevala-jnana* a jiva may lead an active life, but the activity would not taint him, would exert no fresh Karmic influence of the obstructive type upon the soul. During the period between Enlightenment and actual death the person is termed as 'Arhat'; at actual liberation he becomes a 'Siddha'. The Stage of Arhat-ship corresponds roughly to the Hindu ideal of *jivan-mukti*.

The concept of such absolute and perfect knowledge may not be unique to the Jains but their ways of attainment of knowledge are certainly unique. The Upaniṣadic seers drew a distinction between अरा विद्या (lower knowledge) and परा विद्या (higher knowledge), the higher knowledge being conceived as the knowledge by which alone the imperishable being is reached. The Greek philosophers also drew a similar distinction between Doxa and Episteme, between opinion and truth (or knowledge). Plato, in his Republic, brought out the distinction by means of a parable. "Imagine human beings living in a sort of underground den, which has a mouth wide open towards the light, and behind them a breastwork such as marionette players might use for a screen; and there is a way beyond the breastwork along which passengers are moving, holding in their hands various works of art, and among them images

of men and animals, wood and stone, and some of the passers are talking and others silent. They see nothing but the shadows which the fire throws on the wall of the caves; to these they give names; and if we add an echo which returns from the wall, the voices of passengers will seem to proceed from the shadows. They are ourselves, and to us, brought up in the limited-atmosphere of such a den from our childhood, "truth is just nothing but the shadows of the images." But released from the prison of the den and compelled suddenly to go up, we can gradually have a clear view of the Truth, perceiving at first only shadows and reflections in the water, then recognising the moon and the stars, and beholding finally the sun 'in his own proper place.' Thus, their *knowledge* will come to have the clearness of certainty and rescue itself from 'the cloudiness of opinion.'

Incidentally, this parable of Plato also presents a theory of knowledge which is wholly akin to the Jain theory. Knowledge is not something which has to be put into the soul and which was not there before. "The power is already in the soul; and as the eye cannot turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too when the eye of the soul is turned round, the whole soul must be turned from the world of generation into that of being."

*Jina.* •

The attainment of Kevala-Jñāna was achieved by Mahavira after a prolonged practice of profound meditations and austerities for over twelve years, and this entitled him to be called the Jina (conqueror). It may be mentioned that Buddha also led a life of austerities for six years, but that he thought these years wasted and his penances useless for attaining his end; while Mahavira was not only convinced of the necessity of his penances and thought them essential for obtaining perfection, but persevered in some of them even

after becoming a Tirthankara. In Mahavira's view, "the full blaze of omniscience" in the jiva is impossible of accomplishment without the practice of a regulated course of self-discipline and the conquest of karmas. The Karma in Jain Siddhanta is recognised as a substantive force, matter in a subtle form, which builds up a special body called Kārmaṇa-śarīra and which retards the inherent radiance of the soul. "As heat can unite with iron and water with milk, so karma unites with the soul". The kind of matter fit to manifest karma fills all cosmic space, and it has the peculiar property of developing the effects of merit and demerit. Except in final release the soul is always in connection with matter, and the Karma forms the link between the two.

The Jain Siddhanta recognises eight kinds of karma. (1) ज्ञानावरण which obscures right knowledge of details and prevents our receiving mental illumination. It may not only impede us in gaining true knowledge, but may actually give rise to false and hurtful knowledge and misuse of intellectual powers. (2) दर्शनावरण which obscures right perception and prevents our having general comprehension of things. (3) वेदनीय which obscures the bliss-nature of the soul and causes us to experience either the sweetness of worldly pleasures (सुखवेदनीय) or the bitterness of misery (दुःखवेदनीय). In the Jain view, it is not only evil action but also good action that has to be worked off before one can obtain liberation. (4) मोहनीय which obscures the right attitude of the soul towards faith and right conduct and prevents us from speaking and thinking clearly, which in short "bemuses all our faculties." (5) आयु which determines the length of time a jiva must spend in the form with which his Karma has endowed him. (6) नाम which determines the peculiar body of the soul with its general and special qualities and faculties. (7) गोत्र which determines the nationality, caste, family, social standing etc., (8) अन्तराय which causes such energy in the soul as obstructs the performance of good action when there is a desire



to do so. It causes hindrances in life and has the effect of "muddling away every opportunity that life offers." These Karmas are classified into the *Ghāti*, which are particularly obstructive to the accomplishment of the natural perfections of the pure soul and which can only be destroyed by great labour and effort, and the *Aghāti*, which are not very injurious and can be more easily destroyed. The *Ghāti-karmas* are ज्ञानावरण, दर्शनावरण मोहनीय and अज्ञराय and once they are burnt up in the burning glow of austerities, the *Aghāti* can be snapped as easily as a piece of burnt string.

This is clearly admitted in the analysis of the fourteen steps (गुणस्थान) by which a jiva is supposed to ascend to the state of liberation. The analysis of these stages through which a developing soul passes is but one instance of "the amazing knowledge of human nature which Jain ethics display." Deliverance is impossible so long as the soul is bound by and does not fully annihilate the *Ghāti-Karma*, but once freed from the *Ghāti-karma* the soul may retain its connection for sometime with the *Aghāti-karmas* without being effectively bound by them. In the ladder of the fourteen steps, the first step (मिथ्यात्व) is when the soul is completely under the influence of Karma and does not know its true good at all. From the first step, either through the influence of the past good karma or in response to some external stimulus, the soul obtains a glimpse of the true faith and thus immediately rises to the fourth stage (अविरत) when although unable to take those vows which help in the fight against Karma, it can, if it likes, control the grossest form of anger, conceit, intrigue and greed, the four अनन्तानुबन्धी *kasāyas*. In the absence of active effort to control these passions, there may be a falling back of the soul to the second stage (मास्त्रादन) which is characterised by a very faint sense of discrimination between what is false and what is true, and from there to either further descent to the first stage or gradual ascent to the third मित्र which typifies a state of uncertainty, one moment

knowing the truth and the next doubting it. The second and the third steps are thus merely transitional and transitory ; it is the fourth step which is really stable after the first stage.

923:33

The distinguishing mark of the fourth stage is that the soul has belief in the path of liberation but is unable to observe the rules of conduct for attaining liberation ; the thought-activity characterising this stage is that the soul has destroyed excessive anger, pride and greed but not entirely escaped from their influence. In this stage, the Jiva however develops the power of curbing anger ( प्रशम ), the realisation that the world is evil ( संवेग ), the capacity for non-attachment ( निर्वेद ), compassion ( अनुकम्पा ) and true faith ( अस्तित्व ). In the fifth stage ( देशविरति ) the desire to realise the objective by the proper regulation of conduct first manifests itself, and the individual takes partial vows, e.g., the vow not to drink intoxicant or eat flesh ( मद्यमांसव्यग्न ) or to keep all the twelve vows of a householder ( अमणोगासक ) or to maintain absolute chastity etc. The sixth stage ( प्रमत्त ) can be ascended by a professed ascetic, who renounces all worldly objects, and who controls even the slight passions. But as yet the jiva remains slack in concentration. By further effort the soul mounts to the seventh stage ( अप्रमत्त ) when renouncing all carelessness, it becomes fully absorbed in spiritual contemplation. From the seventh stage onwards the path of ascent follows two different routes, (1) the route in which the several right-conduct-deluding karmas become quiescent and controlled, and (2) the route in which they get actually destroyed. Thus the eighth stage ( अपूर्वकरण ) is marked by an absolute control or conquest of pride and consequently by an unusual intensification of the power of meditation and concentration. This is the beginning of the first *Sukla-dhyana* pure concentration and gives a joy to the jiva the like of which he has never experienced before. The ninth stage ( अनिवृत्ति ) is marked by an absolute control or conquest of deceit

and consequently, by a special thought activity of still greater purity. The tenth stage (सूक्ष्मसंपराय) is marked by an absolute control or conquest of greed the last of the great passions. From the tenth stage the soul that has followed the route of actual destruction of the karmas directly mounts to the twelfth stage (क्षीणमोह) which is characterised by complete freedom from all the *Ghāti-karmas* and which inevitably leads to the attainment of Kevala-jñāna; but the ascetic who has followed the route of merely controlling the karmas instead of destroying them has to pass through the eleventh stage (उपशान्तमोह) which is a really critical experience. The subsided Karma may at any time "like a flood burst its dam, and force of its current may carry the soul far down the slope he has been climbing, depositing him on either the sixth or the seventh step, or even on the lowest."

There is no falling back from the twelfth stage, because the *Ghāti-karmas* have already been destroyed; and although the *Aghati-Karmas* still persist, they have little power to bind the soul and "can be snapped as easily as piece of burnt string." So limited in fact is the power of the *Aghati-karma* that at death a soul passes at once through the two remaining stages and enters Moksha without delay. The thirteenth stage (सयोगिकेवली) is that of a vibrating perfect soul, that is to say, when the soul has after the destruction of the obstructive karmas, obtained the Kevala but continues to retain its human body; and the fourteenth and last stage (अयोगिकेवली) is that of the vibrationless perfect soul, that is to say, when the perfect soul is leaving its human body in order to proceed to Moksha there to reside for ever in perpetual peace and bliss above the land called Siddhāṣilā.

### *Tirthankara*

Mahavira was now in the Thirteenth stage of his spiritual career. He had purged away all his *Ghāti-karma* and had consequently attained Kevala-jñāna

and Kevala-darsana. Now he devoted himself to the noble task of the active propagation of the Truth and for this purpose of organising the community or Tirtha, he assumed the role of the Tirthankara.

The difference between a Tirthankara and any other Kevalin consists in just this, that the Tirthankara is master of a special Nama-Karma, which gives him a position of peculiar respect and eminence and makes him responsible for the organisation and establishment of a *Sangha*. Most Kevalins in the *Sayogikevali* stage go about preaching truth ; but it is only a Tirthankara who forms the *Tirthas* (or fords) by means of which a jiva can cross this *samsara* over to the other side (i.e., Moksha). It was in the organisation of the Jain *Sangha* that the Tirthankara Mahavira showed his real abilities. He welded together into the *Sangha* the ascetic as well as the layman, and men as well as women, prescribed for all their respective duties, and provided for a rigid discipline and rigorous form of control. In the Buddhist *Sangha* laymen were not organically connected with the clergy : Buddha's church was a church of monks and nuns only and no attempt was ever made to organise a quasi-church of lay-brothers and lay-sisters, or to establish an organic relationship between the clergy and the laity. But Mahavira welded together the two sections of the Order, the clergy and the laity, and accorded to the latter a definite and honourable place in the ecclesiastical scheme and made it incumbent upon them, both as a duty and as an act of merit, to support the clergy by giving alms liberally. As there was a *de jure* relationship involved in the concept of the clergy, so was a *de jure* relationship involved in the concept of the laity ; as there was a definite procedure for the initiation of the monks and nuns, so a special procedure was prescribed for the initiation of lay disciples of the *Sramanopasaka* variety. Above all, the laity was enjoined to be exclusive in their loyalty and patronage. Intercourse with adherents of a rival creed was disapproved, as is clear from the following declaration

made by Ananda, a newly converted disciple of Mahavira : "Truly, Reverend sir, it does not befit me from this day forward to praise and worship any man of a heretic community or any of the Devas or objects of reverence of a heretic community ; or without being first addressed by them to address them or converse with them ; or to give them or supply them with food and drink or delicacies or dainties except it be by the command of the King or the community or any powerful man or a deva or by the orders of one's elders or by the exigencies of living."

For initiation into the *Sangha*, a layman was required first to renounce five faults (अतिचार), first, doubt (शंका), secondly, the desire to belong to another faith (कांक्षा), thirdly, misgivings about the reality of the fruits of Karma (विचिक्त्स), fourthly, praise of hypocrites (परप्रशंसा) and fifthly, all association with them (संस्तवन). That done, he was to take the twelve lay vows. (1) The vow never intentionally to destroy a jiva that has more than one sense (स्थूलप्राणातिपातविरमण). This vow would not prevent a king leading any army in defence of his kingdom ; but it forbids the killing of weak creatures and of acting as *agent provocateur*. It forbids animal sacrifice. (2) The vow never to indulge in falsehood or exaggeration (स्थूलमूषावादविरमण). This vow enjoins commercial honesty and forbids rash speech, revelation of secrets relating to one's wife, giving false evidence, forgery etc. (3) The vow never to steal (स्थूलअदत्तादानविरमण), the vow including stealth from a house, highway-robbery, misappropriation of funds, etc., (4) the vow of chastity (स्वदारसंतीष) by which a man promises to be absolutely faithful to his own wife at all times and never to allow any evil thoughts in his own mind about other women. The vows may be infringed by such activity as evil talk, excessive sexual indulgence, match-making and match-brokerage, unfaithfulness before marriage, and consummating marriage with a girl before she has attained her puberty. (5) The vow of limitation of

possessions (परिग्रह परिमाण), by which a man promises that he will never allow himself to retain more than a certain fixed quantity of houses and fields, gold and silver, cash and corn, servants and cattle, furniture and plenishing. These five vows are called the five *Anuvratas* and they resemble in their subject matter the five great vows a monk takes. If a layman keeps all these five vows and also abandons the use of intoxicants, animal food, and honey, he is entitled to be called a *Śrāvaka*.

The next three vows are called the *Guṇavratas*, for they help the keeping of the first five vows. (6) दिग्विरति which sets bounds to one's travels and thus helps to curtail sin by restricting the area in which one can sin. (7) भोगोपभोगपरिमाण which imposes a limit on the number of things a man may use and is intended thus to help people to keep their vows against lying, covetousness and stealing. (8) अनर्थ-दण्डविरति by which a man vows not to think evil of others, nor to persuade people to do evil, nor to be careless about keeping or using weapons. The keeping of these vows which need not be taken by ascetics but only laymen, would help the curtailment of sin by limiting the motive for sinning.

The remaining four vows are called *Sikshāvratas*, for they tend to encourage the laity in the performance of their religious duties. By the 9th vow (समायिक) a man promises to perform *Samayika*, that is to say, to spend at least forty eight minutes every day in meditation, thinking no evil of any one, but being at peace with all the world, to meditate on what heights one's soul may reach. By the tenth vow (दिशविरमण) he promises for one particular day to still further contract the limits he has undertaken not to transgress, possibly binding himself during that day not to go outside the village or the house, to have only one meal or to drink nothing but water. The eleventh vow (पौषधोपवास) is of special significance as connecting

the laity closely with the ascetics; it compels the layman to spend at least twenty-four hours every month as a monk, observing celibacy, and committing no sort of sin, touching neither food, water, fruit, betelnut, ornaments, scents, nor any sort of weapon. The twelfth vow (अतिविसंविभाग) encourages the laity to support the ascetic community by giving food, water etc.

A definite procedure for initiation was also prescribed. The person who is desirous of being initiated tells a Guru of his wish. The guru reads out the vows and gives him an instruction on each one and its infringements. The layman assents to the instruction and fixes the limits under various vows for himself. Every year he must confess to the ascetic who happens to be available the infractions of the vows and accept the penance given. The vows may be taken for the whole life or for a limited period of time, on the expiry of which they may be taken afresh.

As in the case of a *Śrāvaka*, so for an ascetic there is a definitely prescribed procedure for initiation (प्रव्रज्या). An ascetic is usually initiated into the order with the permission of his guardians after a certain period of probation, during which he receives preliminary training at the hands of a guru, which may last from several days to one or two years. At the end of the probationary period, the novice is initiated into monkhood, the ceremony of initiation being fairly elaborate and highly solemn. After being led in a great procession, the candidate takes off his jewels and clothes, plucks his hair by the hand, and solemnly takes up the five great vows and the life of a homeless wanderer. The five great vows of the ascetic are: (1) *Ahimsa*, never to destroy any living thing. In order to keep this vow, the ascetic is expected to be careful in walking, watchful in speech so as to not give rise to quarrels or murders, and cautious in

his whole daily conduct. He must be careful as to the alms he receives that they can contain no living insects etc. (2) *Asatya-tyāga*, never to indulge in untruthfulness. The five *bhāvanās*, or strengthening clauses to this vow supply a remarkable psychological analysis of the causes which lead to untruthfulness. They condemn speech without deliberation, speech in anger, speech when moved by avarice, or by fear, and speech in fun. One should respect the vow of truthfulness by always avoiding jesting, greed, cowardice and anger and by thinking before speaking. (3) *Asteṣya vrata*, never to steal. A monk must ask permission of the owner before occupying any one's house ; he must repeat such a request from time to time. A junior monk must always show to his guru whatever he has received in alms and then eat it after receiving his permission. (4) *Brahmacharya vrata*, to remain chaste always. A monk is enjoined not to talk about a woman, or look at the form of a woman, or live in the same building as a woman lives in. He must not recall to mind the former amusement and pleasure woman afforded him when he lived in the world ; nor must he eat or drink to excess, or partake of too highly spiced dishes. (5) *Aparigraha vrata*, never to have attachment for anything or any person. "Renouncing liking for pleasant touch, taste, smell, form or word, and for all the objects of the five senses, renouncing hatred for unpleasant things, these are the ways to maintain the vow of Aprigraha."

Apart from the maintenance of these five great vows, the discipline of the ascetic's daily life is very rigid. Getting up at about four o'clock, before sunrise, he performs the daily *प्रतिक्रमण* which is a form of confession of the sins of the past night, then carries out *प्रतिवेक्षण* a daily search for any insect life that may be sheltering in his clothing etc., and after that attends to the list of his morning duties, which include preaching, begging for alms, auricular confession to the Guru, study of the scriptures and meditation.



There are innumerable rules that should be observed when begging, and they differ from sect to sect but all sects agree in only taking what may be reasonably considered to be left over after the needs of the household have been satisfied, and in refusing things specially prepared for the ascetic. In the afternoon *प्रतिलेखन* is performed again and so the evening *प्रतिक्रमण* which now is a confession of sins for the day.

The individual ascetic formed an integral part of the *Sangha*, which was given by the Master a constitution and a code of laws. During his own lifetime Mahavira attracted a large number of disciples, both men and women. He collected an excellent community of fourteen thousand monks, thirty six thousand nuns, one hundred and fifty nine thousand laymen and three hundred and fifty-eight thousand lay women. At the head of these were eleven *Ganadharas* or chief disciples. This was an important item in the organisation of the *Sangha*. Mahavira had seen in the case of Gosāla what special temptations and dangers beset ascetics in their wandering life. He had made the life of his own ascetics fairly full. Unlike the Buddhist *Sramanas*, who had a lot of free time and were often guilty of indolence or indulged in dissensions, disputes and strifes, Mahavira's Nirgrantha ascetics had plenty of work to do by way of the practice of austerities, penances and fasts, besides meditation and the daily routine of duties, to keep them engaged. Anyhow, he insisted on his ascetics taking life and its obligations far more seriously than was the case with the Buddhist sramanas. But he also resolved to combat the degenerating tendencies inherent in all monastic orders by a strong organisation and detailed set of regulations, and above all, as we have mentioned above, by organically connecting it with the lay element in society. This gave to the Jain *Sangha* "a roof in India which the Buddhists never obtained, and that roof firmly planted amongst the laity enabled Jainism to withstand the storm that drove Buddhism out of India."

The *Sangha* as well as the controlling *Ganadharas* and their succeeding *āchāryas* were not law-makers in any sense of the term. The fundamental truths and the law were recognised to have been formally and finally enunciated by Lord Mahavira. The *sangha* had only to apply and expound his regulations, and that was provided to be done by the general assembly of all the monks resident in a particular locality under the ultimate supervision of the *Ganadhara* or *Āchārya*. The procedure was likely to raise an insuperable problem, such as faced Buddhism itself when its band of disciples grew into a large spiritual force preaching and begging throughout all India and even beyond it ; the problem was to effectively administer the spiritual regency in a church-government in which the centre of gravity lay within the circumference, within the small corps of bretheren dwelling in the same circuit. The Jain *Sangha* also rapidly grew, both in its numbers and in the area of its activity. From Bihar its influence spread to Kalinga and from there presumably to South India on one side and to Mathura, Gujrat and the Punjab on the other. Yet the spiritual regency of the Jinas has continued to be administered right upto this day with an honesty, a rigour, and a desire not to lose grip of the fundamental truths enunciated by the Master, which is wholly unique in the annals of any religion with such long history. The anxiety to stick to the original doctrine as closely as possible has enabled Jainism to weather the storms that in India wrecked so many of the other faiths. "The inflexible conservatism of the Jain community has probably been the chief cause of its survival during period of severe affliction ; for there can be little doubt that the most important doctrines of the Jain religion have remained practically unaltered since the first great separation in the time of Bhadrabahu, about 300 B.C. And although a number of less vital rules concerning the life and practices of the monks and laymen, which we find recorded in the holy scriptures, may have fallen into oblivion or disuse,

there is no reason to doubt that the religious life of the Jain community is now substantially the same as it was two thousand years ago. It must be confessed from this that an absolute refusal to admit changes has been the strongest safeguard of the Jainas."

---

## ENUNCIATION OF THE TRUTH

### *Mahavira's Teachings.*

The teachings of Mahavira have come down to us as a living tradition which grew up and took a complete literary form through ten centuries from his demise. The original doctrine was contained in the Purvas of which there were fourteen, which Mahavira himself taught to his disciples. The fourteen Purvas were presumably preceded by the existence of ten Purvas, which had embodied the religious traditions of Parsva and which formed, as we are led to believe by a legend mentioned in the *Bhagavati*, a common basis of the Jain and Ajivaka canons. The knowledge of the Purvas was gradually lost till it became totally extinct. Only one of the Mahavira's disciples, Arya Sudharma, handed them down, and they were preserved during six generations more. In the second century after Mahavira's death there was a terrible famine in the land of Magadha, which lasted for twelve years. Bhadrabahu was then the head of the Jain Sangha. There is a legend which connects this Bhadrabahu with the Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya and says that owing to the famine Bhadrabahu emigrated with a host of his disciples including Chandragupta himself to Karnataka in South India. This is clearly unwarranted by the chronology of the event. When the famine took place, Bhadrabahu took recourse to the neighbouring Nepal hills and there started his sadhana. During the absence of Bhadrabahu it became evident that the knowledge of the sacred texts was threatening to lapse into oblivion ; and so a Council was called at Pataliputra to compile a recension of the canon. The Jain belief is that the Tirthankara himself taught the Purvas to his disciples, the Ganadharas, and the Ganadharas then composed

the Angas. The Council performed its task successfully, although there was great difficulty in the compilation of the twelfth *anga*, the *Dṛṣṭivāda*, which is believed to have incorporated the fourteen Purvas at the time when they ceased to exist independently of the *Anga* literature. The difficulty was that the head of the community in Magadha did not have a complete knowledge of the Purvas and so was not able to proceed with the business without the guidance from a distance of Bhadrabahu himself.

It may be mentioned that the famous Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela furnishes a confirmation of the Jain tradition regarding the Council of Pataliputra and the compilation of a recension of Angas "in sixty-four sections." "It is not by accident that the knowledge of the Purvas" says Jacobi, "is said to have commenced to fade away at the same time when the Angas were collected by the Sangha of Pataliputra." The loss of the Purvas and later on of the *Dṛṣṭivāda* was due largely to the rise of other books on their basis. The very name Purva (which means the former, the earlier) testifies to the fact that they were superseded by a new canon. It may be inferred that the Purvas were, like the Upanishads, a heterogenous type of literature presenting a wide diversity of sometimes mutually conflicting views, and therefore extremely difficult to master. Jacobi is of the opinion that they were devoted to the description of controversies held between Mahavira and rival teachers. It is true that the *Dṛṣṭivāda*, which is said to have included the fourteen Purvas, dealt chiefly with the *dṛṣṭis* or philosophical opinions of the Jains and other sects. The title which is added to the name of each Purva, would seem to support this view. When the opponents of Mahavira died and the sects headed by them became extinct, the controversies related in the Purvas evidently lost their interest and ceased to be of any practical significance. That reason may have been partly responsible for their neglect.

The Angas came in the course of time to be known and acknowledged as the only authoritative sacred books of Jainism. They were expressly referred to in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* as the "Canon of the Jinas, which has been taught, produced and declared by the Sramanas, the Nirgranthas." The Digambaras, however, refuse to recognise the authenticity of the Angas. After the famine and the Council of Pataliputra which had compiled the recension of the Angas, the adherents of Bhadrabahu returned to Magadha but refused to consider the compilation satisfactory and so declared that the Purvas and the Angas had been irrecoverably lost. This became the basis of the belief of the Digambaras who hold that what exists as the Siddhanta is not in its original form at all. Such contention does not appear to be well grounded on the facts of history, although it is undoubtedly true that the works of *siddhanta* are the product of a process of compilation which extended over a long period of at least one thousand years. After compilation by the Council of Pataliputra the Canon fell into a state of great disorder again and was on the verge of being lost, when it was ultimately reduced to writing at the Council of Valabhi under the presidency of Devarddhi Ganin in 5th century A.D. During the period between the two councils, that is to say between the Council of Pataliputra in the 4th century B.C. and the Council of Valabhi in the 5th Century A.D., written copies of the *siddhanta* were not easily extant. Some privately owned copies must have existed, but it is certain that the teachers made no use of written books when teaching the *siddhanta* to novices, as they undoubtedly began to do afterwards. What the Council of Valabhi presumably did was to issue a large edition of the *siddhanta* so as to provide every teacher with copies of the sacred books. This edition of course was merely a redaction of the sacred books which existed already. But in the course of ages, passages must have crept into the text at any time and additions must have been made to the

several books, as is clear from the variety of language forms in which different parts of the canon are written. Arguing from the language of the composition, Jacobi is of the opinion that "the first book of the *Achārāṅga* and that of the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga sūtra* may be reckoned among the most ancient parts of the *Siddhanta*" The earliest portions of the Canon do undoubtedly belong to the period of the first disciples of Mahavira himself, while the latest portions would presumably be nearer the time of Dēvardhi Gaṇin.

Notwithstanding occasional later accretions, however, the text of the *Angas* and of some at least of the *Upāṅgas* offer a substantially correct description of the state of society, religion and thought in which Mahavira performed his Sadhana and attained omniscience and of the teachings of the Lord himself.

### *View of the world.*

Like Buddha, Lord Mahavira presented a gloomy picture of the world. "The (living) world is afflicted miserable, difficult to instruct and without discrimination."

Thus begins the second lecture of the first book of *Achārāṅga* "Quality is the seat of the root, and the seat of the root is quality. He who longs for the qualities, is overcome by great pains, and he is careless. (For he thinks) I have to provide for a mother, for a father, for a sister, for a wife, for sons, for daughters, for a daughter-in-law, for my friends, for near and remote relations, for my acquaintances, for different kinds of property, profit, meals and clothes. Longing for these objects, people are careless, suffer day and night, work in the right and the wrong time, desire wealth and treasures, commit injuries and violent acts, direct the mind, again and again, upon those injurious things (described in the first lecture). (Doing so) the life of some mortals (which by destiny would have

been long) is shortened. For when with the deterioration of the perceptions of the ear, eye, organs of smelling, tasting, touching, a man becomes aware of decline of life, they (i.e., those failing perceptions) after a time produce dotage. Or his kinsmen with whom he lives together will, after a time, first grumble at him and he will afterwards grumble at them. He is not fit for hilarity, playing, pleasure, show. Therefore, ah! proceeding to pilgrimage, and thinking that the present moment is favourable (for such intentions), he should be steadfast and not, even for an hour, carelessly conduct himself. His youth, his age, his life fade away.

“A man who carelessly conducts himself, who killing, cutting, striking, destroying, chasing away, frightening (living beings) resolves to do what has not been done (by any one)—him his relations with whom he lived together, will first cherish, and he will afterwards cherish them. But they cannot help thee or protect thee nor canst thou help them or protect them.

“Or he heaps up treasures for the benefit of some spendthrifts, by pinching himself. Then after a time he falls in sickness; those with whom he lives together will first leave him and he will afterwards leave them. They cannot help thee or protect thee, nor canst thou help them or protect them.”

In bold relief against this gloomy view of the *Samsāra*, there is presented the bright prospect of religious life as lived and taught by Lord Mahavira. Mahavira developed a systematic exposition of *Kriyāvāda* or *Karmavāda* which he clearly distinguished from (1) the *Akriyāvāda* of Gosāla, who was essentially a fatalist, (2) *Ajñānavāda* or agnosticism of Sanjaya, and (3) the *Vinayavāda* of the average ascetic, who believes that the goal of religious life is realised by conformation to the rules of discipline. He also distinguished it from the other brands of *Kriyāvāda*, by defining his own



creed as follows. "The painful condition of the self is brought about by one's own action, it is not brought about by any other cause (fate, creator, chance or the like)" "Individually a man is born, individually he dies, individually he falls (from this state of existence), individually he rises (to another). His passions, consciousness, intellect, perceptions and impressions belong to the individual exclusively. Here, indeed, the bonds of relationship are not able to help or save one." "All living beings owe their present form of existence to their own Karman; timid, wicked, suffering latent misery, they err about (in the circle of births), subject to birth, old age and death." Mahavira declared that there are as many souls as living individuals, and that karman consists of acts, intentional or unintentional, that produce effects on the nature of the soul. The soul is not passive in the sense that it remains untouched or unaffected by what a person does for the sake of some interests. It is susceptible to the influences of *Karma* and it possesses the capacity to actively annihilate Karma. By the practice of austerities and penances the jiva can wear out and ultimately destroy the effects of sinful *karma* committed in former existences and by the practice of far-reaching self-restraint it can free itself from the production of new karmas. The result of this freedom from the bondage of Karma will be a non-aging of the self in the course of *samsara* in future, and the attainment of the eternal and blissful condition of the soul in its perfection.

This condition of the soul is realisable in this very existence and solely by human efforts, if rightly directed. The life of the Master stood for all his disciples as a living example of such realisation. The development and manifestation of supreme personality, such as was attained by Lord Mahavira himself, was the visible fruition of religious effort and self-discipline; and this self-discipline was set out and preached by him for the adoption of all persons, male or female, irrespective of any class or caste distinctions.

## Fundamental Truths :

But, said Mahavira, there is no right conduct without right knowledge and no right knowledge without the right belief. It is therefore, desirable to first explain the fundamental ideas of Jain Philosophy.

The foundation of true metaphysics, according to Jainism, consists of nine categories *Jiva*, *Ajiva*, *Punya*, *Papa*, *Asrava*, *Samvara*, *bandha*, *nirjara*, and *Moksha*. Sometimes the number of categories is reduced to seven by including two of them, *punya* and *papa*, under other heads.

*Jiva* or soul, according to Jain metaphysics, is a substance, its chief characteristic being Chaitanya (consciousness) ; but as a substance it is absolute and permanent, unlike the Buddhist belief. The Jain idea of the *Jiva* differs from the Brahmanic idea, in so far as it is the *jiva* which is believed to suffer and enjoy the fruit of its deeds and which, in consequence of the karma it has acquired, is believed to go through the succession of rebirths and finally, obtaining freedom through the destruction of its karmas, to soar upwards to moksha. "It performs different kinds of actions, it reaps the fruit of those actions, it circles round returning again ; these and none other are the characteristics of the soul." The soul in its pure state is possessed of infinite perception (अनन्तरङ्ग), infinite knowledge (अनन्तर), infinite bliss (अनन्तसुख) and infinite power (अनन्तशक्ति). It is all perfect. Ordinarily however, with the exception of a few released pure souls (सिद्ध) all the other jivas (सत्त्व) have all their purity and power covered with a veil of karmic matter which has been accumulating in them from beginningless time. *Ajiva* is in all respects the opposite of *jiva*, it means things inanimate, matter. Karma is *ajiva*, which comes into contact with the *jiva* and binds its power ; but the union of *jiva* with *ajiva* can never be so complete as to make their separation impossible. The *jiva* is a substance (द्रव्य) in the sense that

it occupies a space-point in our mundane world, has a limited size and is not all-pervasive; it is called *jīvāstikāya*, the word *astikāya* meaning anything that occupies space or has some pervasiveness. But the *jiva* is not matter, for it has consciousness which matter cannot have. Of the *jiva* the Jains have made a fivefold classification according to the number of senses it possesses. The *स्यावर jiva* possesses only one sense, the sense of touch, but has four प्राण, touch, body, the power of exhaling and inhaling, and the allotted term of life. Water, fire, wind, and all vegetable is supposed to have *स्यावर Jivas*. The *द्वीन्द्रिय jiva* possesses two senses, the sense of taste and the sense of touch, and has six प्राण, taste and speech in addition to the four प्राण of the *स्यावर jiva*. Such *jivas* are in worms, leeches, earth-worms, etc. The *त्रीन्द्रिय jiva* similarly possesses three senses, the sense of smell in addition to those of taste and touch and seven प्राण, examples of such being ants, bugs, moths etc. The *चतुरिन्द्रिय jiva* possesses four senses, of touch, taste, smell and sight and eight प्राण, the category including such beings as wasps, scorpions, mosquitoes, gnats, flies, locusts and butterflies. The *पंचेन्द्रिय jiva* possesses all five senses; of hearing, taste, touch, smell and sight and includes human beings as well as animals, besides hell-beings and demigods. But all these classes of *jiva* are to be clearly distinguished from *Ajiva* which is classified into *रूपी* and *अरूपी*. *रूपी* division is *पुद्गल* or matter, which possesses colour, smell, taste and form and is perceptible to touch. Its *अरूपी* division is further subdivided into *धर्मास्तिकाय* which helps the *jiva* associated with *Pudgla* to progress, *अधर्मास्तिकाय* which keeps it motionless, *आकाशास्तिकाय* which gives it space and *काल* which gives it a continuity of changes.

As was said above, it is the union of *jiva* with matter which causes and constitutes *samsara*. The form of this union is determined by the force of *Karma*. *Karma* is a substantive force, a sort of infra-atomic particles

of matter, which have the peculiar property of developing the effects of merit. Karma acts in such a way that every change which takes place leaves a mark which is retained and built into the organism to serve as the foundation for future action. *Punya* is the name of those actions which lead to the good karma, which in its turn is productive of peace of mind ; *Papa* is just the opposite of *गुण*. *Punya* may be laid up in the following nine ways ; by giving food to deserving people who are hungry, weak, destitute of help and needy (अन्नपुण्य), by giving water to the thirsty (पानपुण्य) ; by giving residence, by giving sleeping accommodation, by giving clothes, by thinking well of every one and wishing them well (संकल्प) ; by exerting ourselves to render service to others or to save life ; by speaking sweetly and so as to influence others towards religion and morality (स्तवन) ; and by reverent salutations (नमस्कार). *Papa* may be earned in eighteen ways ; by destroying life (प्राणातिपात) by speaking untruthfully (मृषावाद) ; by acting dishonestly (अदत्तादान) by unchaste conduct (मैथुन) ; by excessive love of one's own possessions (परिग्रह) ; by getting angry without a cause (क्रोध) ; by conceited behaviour (मान) ; by intrigue or cheating (माया) ; by avarice (लोभ) ; by over-fondness (रग) for a person or a thing ; by hatred or envy (द्वेष) ; by quarrelsomeness (कलह) ; by slander of others (अभ्याख्यान) ; by telling stories to discredit any one (पेगुण्य) ; by continually thinking of other's faults (परपरिवाद) ; by excessive attachment to temporal and transitory objects of affection (रति) ; by hypocrisy (मायामृषा) ; and by false faith (मिथ्यात्व). It is needless to labour the point that such detailed analysis of the acts of merit and demerit entitles Jainism to be considered as primarily an ethical philosophy.

Karma, the accumulated result of action, is one of the central ideas of Jain Philosophy, and *Āsrava* deals with the way in which karma is acquired by the human soul. There are forty-two chief channels of *Āsrava* through which karma affects a *jīva* ; of these seventeen are regarded as major—the five

senses, the four *kashāyas* i.e., anger, conceit, intrigue and avarice, the five अघ्नत or omission to take the vows, and the three yogas, that is to say entanglement with a material object of the mind, speech and body. But there is a distinction between the channels and the Karmas which actually enter through these channels, the distinction is represented by two terms *Bhāvāsrava* and *Karmāsrava*. *Bhāvāsrava* means the thought activities of the soul through which or on account of which the Karma particles affect the soul ; *bhāvāsrava* is that kind of change in the soul which enables the karma to affect the soul while *karmāsrava* is the actual movement of contiguous karma matter towards the soul. *Bhāvāsrava* is of five kinds, namely मिथ्यात्व (delusion), अविर्गति (want of control), प्रमाद (inadvertence), योग (activities of body, mind and speech) and वषाय (passions). *Karmāsrava*, which means the actual movement of matter towards the soul, affects the soul in eight different ways ज्ञानावरण, दर्शनावरण, वेदनीय मोहनं य आय, नाम, गत्र and अन्तर्गम्य all of which have been explained in another connection before.

Opposed to *Āsrava* is *Samvara*, which means the arrest of the inflow of karmas into the soul. The subject is of supreme importance in so far as it implies a discipline which every individual is expected to practise in his own life. There are fifty-seven ways of impeding karmas ; the five *samitis* consisting of the use of trodden tracks in order to avoid injury to insects (ईयसमिति), gentle and holy talk (आषास०), care in eating (एषण०), cleanliness (आदान०) and the careful disposal of rubbish and refuse (परिष्ठापनिका); the three *guptis* or restraints of body, speech and mind; the twenty-two *parishahas* or endurance of hardships of hunger, thirst, cold, heat, cloth, lodging etc., ten duties (धर्म) particularly incumbent upon monks, like forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, freedom from greed, fasting, control of mind, body and speech, truth, cleanliness, nonattachment, chastity ; five *Charitra* or rules of conduct, twelve *bhāvanās* or reflections

about the transient character of the world, about our helplessness without the truth, about the cycles of world-existence, about our own responsibilities for our good and bad actions, about the difference between the soul and the non-soul ; about the uncleanness of our body and all that is associated with it, about the influx of karmas and its stoppage and the destruction of those karmas which have already entered the soul, about soul, matter and the substance of the universe, about the difficulty of attaining true knowledge, faith and conduct, and about the essential principles of the world. Corresponding to the two modes of inrush of karmas there are two kinds of control of the inrush of karma into the soul. *Bhāvasamvara* means thought modifications with a view to stop the inflow of karmas and *Karmasamvara* or *dravyasamvara* means the actual stoppage of the inflow of karma.

*Bandha* is the name of the stage after *Karmāsrava* as *nirjarā* is the name of the stage after *Karmasamvara*. *Bandha* means the bondage of the soul by the karma, that is to say, subjection of soul to the laws of birth and death, old age and decay, pleasure and pain and other vicissitudes of life brought about by the effect of karma. The Jain view is that we are, by our actions of mind, speech and body, continually producing subtle karma matter, which in the first instance is called *bhāvakarma* and later on transforms itself into *dravyakarma*, thus pouring into the soul and sticking there by coming into contact with the passions of the soul. The process of generation of Karma and its pouring into and sticking to the soul has been analysed into four stages, which can be clearly distinguished from each other but not described in the spoken language with sufficient lucidity, *bhāvāsrava*, *karmāsrava*, *bhāva-bandha* and *karmabandha*. According as good or bad karma matter sticks to the soul, the soul gets coloured respectively golden, lotus-pink, white, black, blue and grey ; these are known as *लक्षणा*. Like *āsrava*, *bandha*, *karma* etc., *लक्षणा*s also have been considered

in two forms, as *bhāvaleśyā* i.e., the feelings generated by the accumulation of the karma matter, and the *dravya-leśyā* i.e., the actual coloration of the soul by it. *Bandha* or bondage of the soul by the karma is of four kinds according to its nature (प्रकृति), duration (स्थिति), essence (अनुभाव) and content (प्रदेश). Man's passions are responsible for the nature and duration of Karma and intensity and mass of Karma is largely determined by his exertion.

After the effect (विपाक) of a particular karma matter has been once produced, it is discharged and purged off the soul. The process of purging off of the karma is called *Nirjarā*. *Nirjarā* also is of two kinds, *bhāvanirjarā*, i.e., the change in the soul by virtue of which the karma particles are destroyed, and *dravya-nirjarā* i.e., the actual destruction of the karma particles. Destruction of the karma is automatic after the reaping of its effects (विपाक) but is possible by proper exertion even before its time of fruition (औपक्रमिक). The best way is by burning up karma in the glow of austerities (तप). These austerities are of two kinds, exterior or bodily and interior or spiritual. The six exterior austerities are अनशन (fasting), ऊणोदरी (graduated decrease of the quantity of food), भिक्षाचर्या (begging), रसपित्याग (giving up dainty foods), वायवलेष (mortification of the flesh), and संलीनता (avoidance of temptation by control of limbs etc.); and the six interior austerities include प्रायश्चित्त (confession), विनय (reverence and humility), वैयावृत्य (service), स्वाध्याय (study), ध्यान (Meditation), and कायोत्सर्ग (showing and feeling absolute indifference to the body and its needs).

When the soul is freed from all bondage to Karma, it gets released from the circle of births. It then attains *Moksha* or complete deliverance. It becomes a *siddha* or a perfect soul, there is no returning again to a worldly state. The *siddha* has been defined as a being "without caste, unaffected by smell, without the sense of taste, without feeling, without form, with-

out hunger, without pain, without sorrow, without joy, without birth, without old age, without death, without body, without karma, enjoying an endless and unbroken calm." The attainment of Siddhahood is by no means restricted to Jain ascetics, it is equally possible for householders of eminent holiness (गृहस्थलिंग-सिद्ध) and even for non-Jains who live a perfectly holy life (अगृहस्थलिंग-सिद्ध). Jain ascetics obtaining *siddhahood* would be known as सिद्धासिद्ध. It has sometimes been debated whether *moksha* is a place situated somewhere in the Universe or merely a state or condition of freedom. In the *moksha* state the soul has absolute knowledge and absolute perception so that it knows all things simultaneously : it also has infinite capacity or power for right action (अनन्तवीर्य), so that karma can never subdue this freedom and absolute bliss (अनन्तसुख).

### *System of Ethics.*

From the foregoing analysis of the fundamental truths of Jainism, it will be clear that Jainism may fairly be regarded as a system of ethics rather than a religion. Its extremely severe practical discipline is a special feature of Jainism. Not only for the ascetic but also for the householder does Jainism prescribe a highly rigorous discipline. Like many other Indian doctrines, it emphasises enlightenment and conduct, but to these it adds faith, and so insists upon right faith, right knowledge and right conduct as the three precious principles (गुणरत्नत्रय) of life. Right conduct includes the five vows, which have been mentioned before, -viz., अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य, and अपरिग्रह and a long list of items of self-control and self-restraint. Practically each one of these vows was enjoined in some form or other by other faiths also, but they were quite distinctively interpreted by Jainism. The way in which the doctrine of *Ahimsā* is made to pervade the whole code of conduct is peculiarly Jain. *Ahimsā* has been understood to comprehend *ahimsā* in



thought, by word or act. It is important to add that it has not been explained merely as a negative principle, it has been taken to mean the rendering of active service to others, for we shall be really injuring a person when we can help him but do not. The social or objective side of ethics is not ignored; but in so far as the final aim of Jainism is the development of one's personality, it emphasises the individualistic aspect.

Purification of the mind is insisted upon as the starting point of all ethical life. No kind of asceticism can be of any good until the mind is purified, for with purification of the mind is the removal of attachment (राम) and antipathy (द्वेष) really possible. Purification of the mind is achieved by continuous meditation and constant self-control. During his *Sādhaka* life Mahavira devoted himself intently to meditation and the practice of the ten *dharma*s including संयम (self-control or control of the senses), सत्य (truthfulness), शौच (purity), ब्रह्मचर्य (chastity), आकस्छन्य (absolute want of greed), तप (asceticism), क्षमा (forbearance and patience), मार्दवं (mildness) आज्ञं (sincerity), and मुक्ति (freedom or emancipation from all sins). It was by that means that he ultimately obtained enlightenment and true self-knowledge. समत्व (or the capacity to look on all beings with equality) and ध्यान (or meditation) are interdependent; there can be no *dhyāna* without *śamatva*, nor can there be *śamatva* without *dhyāna*. The Jain *dhyāna* consists in the concentration of the mind on the syllables of the prayer phrases, and is enjoined to be practised as an aid to making the mind steady and perfectly equal and undisturbed towards all things. Further aids to making the mind steady have been mentioned in the Jain texts. They comprehend मैत्री (universal friendship), प्रमाद (the habit of emphasising the good sides of men), कृष्णा (universal compassion) and माद्व्यस्य (indifference to the wickedness of people., i.e., the habit of not taking any note of sinners).

Jain texts give a very close description of the system of ethics in their analysis of *क्व* and *मोक्ष*. Unlike Hinduism, Jainism has correlated ethical teaching with its metaphysical system. The four most important sins are the *kaṣāyas*, anger, conceit, intrigue and greed. They are sister sins, that is to say, a person committing one of them invariably goes to the commission of others. *Krodha* or anger has been stressed first, for it is the source of all sin; then there is *māna* or conceit, *māyā* or cheating and *lobha* or avarice. Jainism argues that the length of time a sin is indulged in affects the nature of the sin. The worst degree to which any of these four sins may be indulged in is called *Anantānubandhi* when the sin is cherished as long as life lasts; while under the sway of sin to this degree it is impossible for a man to grasp any ideas of religion or to give his mind to study. The next, i.e., *Apratyākhyāna* degree is when the sin, though nursed for a year, is confessed at the great annual confession. It would be *Pratyākhyāna* when the sin is confessed and given up at the *caturmāsi* or the four-monthly confession. Under the influence of these degrees of sins a man might possess an intellectual grasp of religious principles, but cannot possibly carry them out into his daily life, for he cannot really give up attachment to the world. The least harmful of the degrees of sins is *sanjvalana*, when they are renounced at the evening confession. The matter has been brought home to the disciple by means of a number of parables. In the case of anger the least harmful degree has been likened to a line drawn on water which soon passes away; the next to one drawn in the dust, which is stamped out and effected in a day, the third to a crack in the dried mud at the bottom of an empty village tank which will not disappear till the yearly rains fill the tank and cover it, and the worst of all to a fissure in a mountain side, which will remain till the end of the world. In the case of Maya or deceit, which leads to crookedness, the last degree can be straightened as one can straighten a bamboo cane; the second degree has been likened to the crooked track of moisture left in the dust by the

dripping from the water carrier's leather bucket; the third degree to a ram's horn; and the worst degree to the knot in the foot of a bamboo; the crookedest thing in the world. The result of any of these four sins, if indulged in the worst degree, is to condemn a man to rebirth in hell; the next worst forces him in his next life to become a bird or a beast, or an insect; it is only the less harmful degrees which would enable him to be reborn a man or a god; and in order to become a siddha one must completely renounce all wrath, conceit, intrigue and greed.

It is important to point out that not only wrath, conceit, intrigue, greed, attachment and enmity are sins in the Jain view, but also such personal characteristics as quarrelsomeness, slander, the telling of stories to discredit others, undue fault-finding, excessive attachment to worldly objects of affection, hypocrisy and false faith. The list is a comprehensive one, and when one remembers that the Lord enjoined upon every Jain, ascetic or householder, to make a daily confession of these sins, one cannot help being impressed by the significantly ethical character of the whole system. Jain ethics is not simply negative as some critics have been often inclined to point out. The chapter on *gun* gives a list of positive social duties, the performance of which is regarded as bringing peace of mind to the individual. These duties are the giving of food to the hungry, the weak and the needy, the giving of water to the thirsty, the giving of clothes to the destitute, the giving of shelter and lodging to the homeless. By thinking well of every one and by exerting ourselves to render them services also we accumulate merit. Sweet and fruitful speech, reverential behaviour and generally amiable disposition are among the other acts of *Punya*. All these are virtues which are the only firm basis of a truly civic and socially useful life; and even Mrs. Stevenson admits "not in vain are practical ethics wedded to philosophical speculation" in Jainism.

## Jain Atheism

It is sometimes said that Jainism is atheistic (नस्तिक) If *nastika* means an unbeliever in a life beyond, i.e., "one who does not believe in a surviving self," then surely Jainism is not at all *nastika*. If *nastika* means one who repudiates the authority of the Veda, then Jainism is certainly *nastika*. If *nastika* means one who does not believe in God, then a categorical answer is not possible to make, for although Jainism does not believe in a creative God, it does believe in godhead. Jainism deliberately rejects the conception of a supreme personality responsible for the creation of the world. The Nyāya philosopher says that the world is of the nature of an effect and that it must have been created by an intelligent agent, the agent being God (ईश्वर); but the argument is conclusively controverted by the Jain. (1) The cause of an effect need not necessarily be intelligent, and if God who is regarded as the cause of the creation be regarded as intelligent on the analogy of human causation, then he must be admitted to be imperfect like human beings. (2) Also God must be admitted to have a body, for we have never seen any intelligent creator without a body. (3) Even if it is admitted for the sake of argument that a bodiless God can create the world by his will and activity, did he take to creation through a personal whim and give high status to some and poverty to others quite arbitrarily? If the creation took place simply through his own nature, then what is the good of admitting him at all? Professor Dasgupta sums up the rest of the argument like this :

• "Assuming for the sake of argument that God exists you could never justify the adjectives with which you wish to qualify him. Thus you say that he is eternal. But since he has no body, he must be of the nature of intelligence and will. But this nature must have changed in diverse forms for the production of diverse kinds of worldly things which are of so varied a nature. If there were no change in his knowledge

and will then there could not have been diverse kinds of creation and destruction. Destruction and creation cannot be the result of one unchangeable will and knowledge. Moreover, it is the character of knowledge to change, if the word is used in the sense in which knowledge is applied to human beings, and surely we are not aware of any other kind of knowledge. You say that God is omniscient but it is difficult to suppose how he can have any knowledge at all, for as he has no organs he cannot have any perception, and since he cannot have any perception, he cannot have any inference either. If it is said that without the supposition of a God the variety of the world would be inexplicable, this also is not true for this implication would only be justified if there were no other hypothesis left. But there are other suppositions also. Even without an omniscient God you could explain all things merely by the doctrine of moral order or the law of *Karma*."

Jainism rejects the conception of creative divinity as self-discrepant. Its belief is that there is no God and that the world was never created. In this view the Jain is curiously enough in agreement with the Mimamsaka, the upholder of strict orthodoxy. But as we mentioned above, although Jainism does not believe in a creative God, it does believe in godhead. Theistic systems are generally anthropomorphic, they bring down God to the level of man. Jainism, on the other hand, looks upon man himself as God when his inherent powers are fully in blossom. Every liberated soul is divine, God in Jain theory being only another word for the soul at its best. In rejecting God who is so by his own right and with it also the belief that salvation may be attained through his mercy, Jainism recognises that *karma* by itself and without the intervention of any divine power is adequate to explain the whole world of experience and thus impress on the individual his complete responsibility for what he does. "Jainism more than any other creed gives absolute religious

independence and freedom to man. Nothing can intervene between the actions which we do and the fruits thereof. Once done they become our masters and must fructify."

God in Jainism is the ideal man, that is to say, the ideal of man ; there is a way to achieve it and that is the Jain ethical way. Others have striven in that way and achieved it in the past, and their example is a constant inspiration to us. "Such an ideal carries with it all necessary hope and encouragement, for what man has done, man can do."

---

## PROPAGATION OF THE DOCTRINE

The last thirty years of his life Mahavira spent in the propagation of his doctrine. He travelled through many parts of India, preaching and converting people to his faith, stopping as before for the four months of the rainy season at one place. It is possible to re-construct a complete account of his travels from the names of the places where he passed his rainy seasons, mentioned in the Jain texts.

### *Conversion of the Ganadharas*

The Lord attained the *Kevala-jñāna* while sitting in meditation under a *Sāla* tree in the field of the householder Samaga outside the town Jrimbhikagrama. Immediately on the attainment of *Kevalajñāna*, there is a Jain tradition, the Thirthankara holds a public conference in *Samavasarana* and preaches the doctrine, making converts. But Mahavira made no converts in his first public audience. This in Svetambara Jain texts is regraded as having been a very "unusual occurrence" (अव्यवहार). Probably the reason was because the public was not available at the spot to listen to his preaching. The Digambara tradition does not admit the holding of the first *samavasarana* in the field of Samaga immediately on the attainment of *Kevala-jñāna*.

Knowing that a big *Yajña* had been organised by a Brahman Somilacharya at a place at some distance from Jrimbhikagrama, he moved on to that place and held his second public audience there. He explained his own doctrine of the Jiva, Karma, Asrava, Bandha, Nirjara and Moksha and then went on to say that "four things of paramount value are difficult to obtain here by a living being ; human birth, instruction in the Law, belief in it and energy in self-control. The Universe

is peopled by manifold creatures, who are, in this *samsāra*, born in different families and castes for having done various actions. Sometimes they go to the world of gods, sometimes to the hells, sometimes they become Kshattriyas, or Chandalas or Bukkasas, or worms and moths, or (insects called) Kunthu and ants. Thus living beings of sinful actions, who are born again and again in ever-recurring births, are not disgusted with the *samsāra*, but they are like warriors (never tired of the battle of life). Living beings bewildered through the influence of their actions, distressed and suffering pains, undergo misery in non-human births. But by the cessation of Karman, perchance, living beings will reach in due time a pure state and be born as men. And though they be born with a human body it will be difficult for them to hear the Law, having heard which they will do penances, combat their passions and abstain from killing living beings. And though, by chance, they may hear the Law, it will be difficult for them to believe in it ; many who are shown the right way, stray from it. And though they have heard the Law and believe in it, it is difficult for them to fulfil it strenuously ; many who approve of the religion, do not adopt it. Having been born as a man, having heard the law, believing in it, and fulfilling it strenuously, an ascetic should restrain himself and shake off sinfulness. The pious obtain purity, and the pure stand firmly in the Law ; (the soul afterwards) reaches the highest Nirvāṇa, being like unto a fire fed with ghee." Mahāvira's fame as an omniscient seer began to spread fast and widely; and among others, eleven of the learned Brahmana teachers, who had come with a band of disciples to participate in the *Yajña*, felt persuaded to visit him.

The visit and conversion of these eleven Brahmana teachers has been described in some detail by the Jain texts, both Svetāmbara and Digambara. The Digambara accounts mention that Indrabhūti, who had become a very learned pandit and grown extremely vain of his



learning, was once questioned by an old man and asked to explain the meaning of a verse. The verse had been repeated to him by Mahavira, who had immediately afterwards become so lost in meditation that he did not get an explanation of it from the saint. It contained references to *kāla* and *dravya*, *pañcāstikāya dravya* and *leśyā*, not one of which terms did Gautama Indrabhūti really understand. Nor, being a true scholar, could he pretend to have a knowledge which he did not possess. So he sought out Mahavira for an explanation. In the presence of the great ascetic all his pride fell from him and he became a pupil of Mahavira along with his band of disciples and learned brothers. The Svetāmbara account ascribes the meeting between Mahavira and Gautama Indrabhūti and others to a denunciation on the part of Mahavira of the animal sacrifice at which they were assisting. They were naturally much enraged at his audacity and came forward to oppose him and expose the falseness of his teaching ; but when they listened to Mahavira's discourses and heard the gentle and thoughtful answers he gave to all questioners, they became convinced of the truth of his way, decided to cast in their lot with his and became his chief disciples or Ganadharas. Under these Ganadharas were placed all the monks of the Order.

“Why has it been said that the venerable Ascetic Mahavira had nine Gaṇas but eleven Gaṇadharas ? The oldest monk of the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira was Indrabhūti of the Gautama gotra, who instructed five hundred *śramaṇas* ; the middle aged monk was Agnibhūti of the Gautama gotra, who instructed five hundred *śramaṇas* ; the youngest was Vāyubhūti of the Gautama gotra, who instructed five hundred *śramaṇas*. The Sthavira Arya-Vyakta of the Bhāradwāja gotra instructed five hundred *śramaṇas* ; the Sthavira Arya-Sudharman of the Agnivaiśyāyana gotra instructed five hundred *śramaṇas* ; the Sthavira Mandīkaputra of the Vāśiṣṭhagotra instructed two hundred and fifty *śramaṇas* ; the Sthavira Mauryaputra of the

Kāshyapagotra instructed two hundred and fifty *śramaṇas*; the Sthavira Akampita of the Gautama gotra and Sthavira Achalabhrātā of the Hārītāyana gotra, both Sthaviras instructed together three hundred *śramaṇas* each; the Sthaviras Metārya and Prabhāsa, both of the Kaundinyagotra, instructed together three hundred *śramaṇas* each. Therefore it has been said that the venerable Ascetic Mahavira had nine Gaṇas but eleven Gaṇadharas." (Kalpasutra, pp. 286-7).

These conversions gave to Mahavira a respectable community of 4,411 *śramaṇas*. It is presumable that at this place not only *śramaṇas* but also lay disciples joined Mahavira's order; in Jain texts there are references to the Lord having established a community of four orders चत्वारिंशत् i.e., monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen at the same time. We have already mentioned that, unlike Pārśva, who seems to have grouped all the laymen and similarly laywomen together, Mahavira made a clear distinction between ordinary laymen who merely expressed their sympathy with the Jain doctrine and faith as Jains and the body of laymen अमणोरसक who took a special type of *dīkṣā* and who clearly undertook to observe the twelve lay vows. As Mrs. Stevenson has said, the genius for organisation which Mahavira possessed is shown in nothing more clearly than in the formation of this and the order of laywomen अमणोरसिका. These two organisations gave the Jainism a root in India that the Buddhists and, one might add, the other systems of *parivrajaka* orders, never obtained, and that root firmly planted amongst the laity enabled Jainism to withstand the storm that drove Buddhism out of India.

### *Influence at Royal Courts :*

*Magadha* : From the scene of Somilācārya's *yajña* Mahavira proceeded to Rajgriha, the old capital of Magadha, where Śrenika (Bimbisara) was the ruling monarch. As we have stated before, Mahavira was a *Jñātrka* from his father's side, but his mother was sister to Ceṭaka, the king of Vaisali, who belonged to

the Licchavi sect of the Kshattriyas. Cēṭaka had seven daughters, out of whom one preferred to be a nun and the other six were married in one or the other royal family of Eastern India. Śreṇika, the ruler of Magadha, was the husband of the youngest of these princesses, Cellanā, who became a lay follower of Mahavira of the Sramanopāsak variety. It is possible that there had been some connection between Magadha and the Jain Church of the age previous to that of Mahavira. The Jain text *Uttarādhyayana* mentions two early kings of Rajgriha named Samudravijaya and his son Jaya ; of these Jaya, the eleventh *cakravartin*, "together with thousands of kings, renouncing the world, practised self-restraint and reached perfection which has been taught by the Jinas." But during the rule of the Saisunagas, right from the beginning there undoubtedly existed strong personal connections between Mahavira and the Magadha rulers. As many as fourteen rainy seasons are recorded to have been spent by Mahavira at Rajgriha, during the period of his preparation and after his attainment of the *Kevala* ; and it is certain that at least during the later period he repaired to the city "not merely as an independent preacher but as one who had the State behind him to directly patronise and sympathise with him in his great mission."

*Videha* : As with the rulers of Magadha, so with the other ruling houses in Eastern India, Mahavira had personal connections ; and these connections must have inevitably helped him to gain followers for his order. From Rajgriha, where he gained numerous followers, both monks and laymen, including the princes Megha Kumar, Abhaya Kumar and others, the Lord proceeded towards Videha country. The capital of Videha was Mithila, which is identified by some scholars with the small town of Janakapura just within the Nepal border. The Videhans seem to have been an adventurous people, scattered as far as Vaisali itself. Mahavira's mother, who was a princess of Vaisali is

spoken of in the Jain texts as Videhadattā ; and there is ample evidence to prove that Mahavira was closely connected with the Videhans. The Videhans had a living interest in the Jain Church. From Kalpa-sutra we know that Mahavira spent six rainy seasons at Mithila, the Metropolis of Videha.

*Vatsa* : The capital of Vatsa, Kausambi, was also visited by Mahavira several times both during the period of preparation and after the attainment of the *Kevala*. The ruler of Kausambi was King Satānika to whom was married Mṛgāvati, the third daughter of Cetaka. Both the King and the queen were devotees of Mahavira and followers of the Jain order. The Jain tradition also affirms that the king's *amātya* (minister) and his wife were Jains by faith. Satanika's son and successor, Udayana, was a great king who made some conquests and contracted matrimonial alliance with the royal houses of Avanti, Anga and Magadha. The Jain literature claims him as a follower of the Jain order.

*Avanti*. Canda Pradyota the ruler of Avanti (Capital, Ujjain), had married the fourth daughter of Cetaka, by name Śivā. Pradyota was called 'Canda' or fierce, for he was temperamentally very excitable and was also the possessor of a large army. There is a story which says that he was fond of Mṛgāvati, the elder sister of his wife, who had been already married to King Satanika of Vatsa, that he asked for Queen Mṛgāvati from Satanika, and that on the refusal of the latter he declared a war against him. Satanika appears to have died before actual hostilities could start ; and when Mahavira visited Kausambi a little later, he induced Canda Pradyota to give up his feeling of revenge and to allow Mṛgāvati to become a nun. Thereupon Satanika's son, Udayana, became the king of Kausambi. Between this Udayana and Pradyota's daughter, the peerless Vāsavadattā, there developed a long romance, round which a large cycle of sanskrit stories

has been written. Udayana, as we have mentioned above, is claimed by Jain tradition as having had respect and sympathy for the Jain church ; but Pradyota also had undeniable sympathy for the Jain faith. There is a mention that along with Mrgāvati of Kausambi, eight of his own queens, Angāravati and others, with his permission, joined the order.

*Campā, capital of Anga.* The ruler of Campā, which was always recognised to be a great centre of Jainism, was Dadhivāhana, who married Padmāvati, the second daughter of Cetaka. Dadhivahana's daughter, Candanā or Candanabālā, was the first woman who embraced Jainism shortly after Mahavira had attained the *kevala*. Jain literature described in great detail the story of Candanā. During the invasion of Campā by King Satanika of Kausambi, Candanā was caught hold of by one of the enemy's army and was sold in Kausambi to a banker named Dhanāvaha. After a short time the banker's wife Mula, felt jealous of her and having cut her hair put her into custody. In this condition she once served a part of her food to Mahavira, and finally joined his ranks as a nun. She headed the order of nuns in Mahavira's *sangha*. Campā seems to have been situated at a distance of a few miles in the neighbourhood of modern Bhagalpur. Its importance as a centre of Jain influence is evident from the fact that Mahavira spent three of his rainy seasons in Campā. After Mahavira's death Campa was visited by Sudharman, the head of the Jain Sangha, at the time of Kunika or Ajatasatru. Ajatasatru seems to have transferred his capital from Rajgrha to Campā on the death of his father ; and Jain tradition mentions that the King "came bare-footed to see the Ganadhara outside the city where he had taken his abode." Sudharman's successor, Jambu, and Jambu's successor, Prabhava, also visited Campā, and Prabhava's successor, Sayyambhava, lived at the city where he composed the *Dasavaikālika-sutra*, containing in ten lectures all the essence of the sacred doctrines of Jainism.

*Licchavis and other Republican clans*

From this brief account of the several ruling houses of Eastern India, it will be clear that Mahavira obtained good support everywhere. His personal connections with the various rulers reached through his mother Trisalā, the Licchavi Princess, and his maternal uncle Cetaka, the king of Vaisali. The Licchavis were recognised all round as high born Kshattriyas, with whom the highest born princes of Eastern India, and not only Eastern India but also as far west as Sindhu-Sauvira, considered it an honour to enter into matrimonial alliance. We have already seen that out of the seven daughters of Cetaka, Padmavati, Mṛgavati, Siva and Cellana were respectively married to the lords of Anga, Vatsa, Avanti and Magadha. The eldest Prabhavati was married to King Udāyana of Vitabhaya, which has been identified at various places in the Jain literature with a town of Sindhu-Sauvira desa. As to what part of the country is Sindhu-Sauvira-desa, whether it is "the province of Badari or Eder, at the head of the Gulf of Cambay" (Cunningham), or "to the north of Kathiawar and along the Gulf of Cutch" (Rhys Davids) or "the province of Multan and Jahravar" (Alberuni), or "in Sindhu or Sindh" (Satrunjaya-Mahatmya), historians are not quite in agreement about; but according to Jain sources Udāyana was the overlord of three hundred and sixty three other towns. Through his relationship with the Licchavis, Mahavira's religion was greatly helped in the course of its spread over Sauvira, Anga, Vatsa, Avanti, Videha and Magadha, all of which were the most powerful kingdoms of the time. It is significant that Buddhist books do not mention Cetaka at all, though they tell us about the constitutional government of Vaisali. "Buddhists took no notice of him, as his influence was used in the interest of their rivals. But the Jainas naturally cherished the memory of the maternal uncle and patron of their prophet, to whose influence we must attribute the fact that Vaisali used to be a stronghold of Jainism,

while being looked upon by the Buddhists as a seminary of heresies and dissent."

The Licchavis were naturally favourable to Mahavira's order. There are many stray references in the Jain Sutras which confirm the fact that the Licchavis were followers of the Jain faith. The capital of the Licchavis formed one of the headquarters of the Jain community during the days of Mahavira. Out of forty-two rainy seasons which he spent as a missionary during his later ascetic life, twelve were passed at Vaisali. Like the Licchavis, the Vajjis, who in fact cannot be strictly differentiated from the Licchavis, came under the influence of Lord Mahavira, for Vaisali seems to have been regarded also as the metropolis of the entire Vajji confederacy. These republics in Eastern India had a type of Government which was senatorial, like the government in the city-state of Rome. The Jñātrikas, whose most noble scion was Mahavira, also formed one of the most important clans included in the Vajjian confederacy. The several clans of the Vajjian confederacy must have been naturally affected by the doctrines of the Nātaputta. The canonical literature of his bitter antagonists, the Buddhists, does not fail to make this admission, however indirectly. "After Mahavira developed his doctrines and preached his faith of unbounded charity to all living beings, the number of his followers among the Licchavis appears to have been large and some men of the highest position appear to have been among them."

The Mallakins also seem to have cherished a feeling of respect and sympathy for the great prophet and his doctrines. Both the Buddhist and the Jain texts agree that the country of the Mallas formed one of the sixteen *Mahājanapadas*. At the time of Mahavira the Mallas appear to have been divided into two confederacies one with its capital at Pava and the other at Kusinara, the two places being respectively the cities where the Jain prophet Mahavira and the Buddha reached

their final liberation. With the Mallas, Jainism seems to have established almost as good connections as with the Licchavis. According to Dr. B. C. Law, we get ample proof for this even from the Buddhist literature.

Geographically Kosala roughly corresponds to modern Oudh, and it seems to have contained three great cities—namely Ayodhya, Saketa and Sravasti—the first two sometimes being often supposed to be one and the same. When one remembers that Sravasti was visited by Mahavira more than once and that he was always well received there one cannot but admit that the Kosalas also came under the influence of Mahavira.

### *Map of Mahavira's travels :*

From this analysis of the various kingdoms and republics of Eastern India, it would appear that Mahavira's reformed church gained followers practically all over the vast stretches of the country. The references in the Jain texts enable us to draw a complete map of Lord Mahavira's travels and to recount the names of some of his prominent followers during the period of his propagation of the faith. The following is the list of the places where he stayed for the successive rainy seasons after the attainment of *Kevala Jñāna*.

It has been stated above that Mahavira attained the *Kevala* while sitting in meditation in a field outside the town Jṛmbhikagrāma and that he made his first converts and established the Sangha at a Samavasarana near the place of Somilācārya's Yajña. From there the Lord proceeded to Rajgrha, the capital of Magadha, where he initiated the princes Meghakumar and Nandisena into the order of monks, gained numerous lay followers including Sulasa, Abhayakumar, and the King Srenika (Bimbisara) himself. The first rainy season he spent at Rajgrha.



After the rains were over, the Lord turned towards Videha, and passing through many villages ultimately reached Kundagrama, his birth place. The town of Kundagrama seems to have been divided into two settlements, a Kshattriyakund where Mahavira's father had lived and a Brahmanakund where lived Devānandā, Mahavira's Brahman foster-mother and her husband by name Rṣabhadatta. Mahavira made his stay in Brahmanakund and there converted to his order the Brahman Rṣabhadatta and his wife Devānandā. It was on this occasion that on the sight of Mahavira Devānandā had that sudden maternal emotion to which reference has been made earlier in this book. Another important convert at Kundagrama was the Kshattriya Jamali who joined the order with his five hundred companions. This Jamali later on organised a schism in the Jain church. From Kundagrama Mahavira proceeded to Vaisali, where he passed the second rainy season.

On the completion of the 2nd rainy season the Lord proceeded towards the Vatsa country. The ruler of Vatsa, Satanika, had died and the kingdom was administered by the widow, Queen Mṛgāvati, on behalf of her minor son Udayana. At Kausambi, the capital of Vatsa, Mahavira held a public audience and converted to his order the Queen Mṛgāvati and an aunt of the King, by name Jayanti. From there, he proceeded further to Kosala, where at Sravasti a number of sympathisers and followers were gained for the Jain faith. The rainy season was passed at Vāṇijyagrāma in Videha, to which Mahavira returned from Kosala. At Vāṇijyagrāma, the merchant Ananda and his wife Śivānandā accepted the Sramonopasaka vows. Ananda became one of the loyal and highly trusted followers of the Lord.

From Vāṇijyagrāma Mahavira repaired at the end of the rainy season to Magadha, where after roaming about the kingdom for several months he settled down for the rainy season at Rajgrha. Among

the new converts this year there were the merchants Dhanya and Shālibhadra.

Campā was the next place which the Lord visited on the completion of the rainy season. Here he converted the prince Mahachandra Kumar. From Campā he proceeded to the province of Sindhu-Sauvira, where Udāyana was ruling over Vitabhaya. It has been already explained how this Udāyana was related to Mahavira through his wife Prabhāvatī. The journey to Sindhu-samvira was very difficult, involving travel in desert areas and hard country ; but Mahavira went to the place in order to give to King Udāyana *dīkṣā* as a '*Sramanopasaka*'. Returning from Sindhu-Sauvira, he spent the rainy season at Vāñijyagrāma.

After the rainy season, a visit was paid to Benares and certain other places in the kingdom of Kāśī, where numerous followers were gained for the Jain church. For the rainy season, the Lord returned to Rajgrha. At Rajgrha he spent a highly fruitful season. King Srenika had proclaimed that he would personally undertake to feed and otherwise overlook the dependents of anybody who desired to join Mahavira's order of monks. As a result of this proclamation, thousands of people joined the order and Mahavira stayed on at Rajgrha giving *dīkṣā* to the comers for sometime even after the finishing of the rainy season. Enraged, probably at the success of Lord Mahavira's ministry, Gosala Mankhaliputra, of whom mention has been made already, began his public criticism of Mahavira's faith, although unsuccessfully, in the course of an argument with Ardraka, a monk of Mahavira's order. The rainy season was spent by Mahavira again at Rajgrha.

Having spent two rainy seasons at Rajgrha, Mahavira proceeded towards Vatsa country, visiting on the way Alabhiya in the kingdom of Kāśī. At Kausambi he converted queen Mrgāvatī and several queens of

Canda Pradyota. From here he proceeded towards Videha, and spent the rainy season at Vaisali.

On the completion of the rainy season he went to Mithila, thence to Kakandi, Sravasti, and the republics of the west, and made numerous conversions. The rainy season was passed at Vāṇijyagrāma.

From here Mahavira proceeded after the rainy season to Magadha, where there was the famous meeting between his followers and the monks of Pārśva's order. As a result of discussion of the several points of difference between the practices of the two orders, Mahavira's leadership of the Jain community was accepted by all. The rainy season was spent at Rajgrha.

From Rajgrha, Mahavira repaired at the end of the season to the Western kingdoms, but returned to Vāṇijyagrāma for spending the next rainy season.

The next year was marked by the occurrence of the first schism in the community, when Jamali separated from the Lord with a small band of his companions. Mahavira himself repaired to Kausambi, then to Rajgrha, where he spent the next rainy season; then after the end of the rains to Campā, where after the death of Srenika, his son, Kunika, had transferred his capital. From Campā he turned towards Mithilā and spent the next rainy season there.

It was when Mahavira proceeded to Sravasti after the rainy season that he had his famous encounter with Gosala, who after separating from Mahavira had continued to hang about the city claiming among his followers the potter-woman Hālāhalā and the minstrel Ayam-pul. Gosala had, of course, claimed for himself the status of a Tirthankara, so that there arose the anomaly of two Tirthankaras staying at the same town. When questioned about it, Mahavira denounced Gosala and stated in a public audience that he was not a Tirthankara.

nor a true believer, whereupon Gosala got enraged, and visited Mahavira for a religious discussion. The discussion was, of course, inconclusive, but two disciples of Mahavira who intervened were burnt up by his fiery power. Gosala attempted to burn Mahavira himself, but was unsuccessful. The after-effects of Gosala's fiery attack were, however, felt by Mahavira and he suffered great pain later on. The rainy season was passed at Mithilā.

From Mithilā, Mahavira went towards Kosala-Pañcāla, visiting Sravastī, Ahicchatra, Hastinapur and other towns, and returned for the next rainy season to Vāṇijyagrāma. The last few rainy seasons were spent at Rajgrha, Vāṇijyagrāma, Vaisali, Vaisali again, Rajgrha, Nalanda, Vaisali, Mithila, Rajgrha, Nalanda, Mithila, Mithila again, Rajgrha, until at the age of 72 he attained Nirvāṇa on Kārtika Amāvasyā at Pāvāpurī.

### *Mahavira's Community of Followers :*

Mahavira succeeded in attracting a large number of disciples, both men and women, and organised his community into four orders. Chief among his followers were fourteen thousand monks, at the head of whom stood the eleven Gaṇadharas, and thirty-six thousand nuns, at the head of whom was Chandanā. These included "three hundred sages who knew the fourteen Purvas, who though no Jinas came very near them, thirteen hundred sages who were possessed of the Avadhi-knowledge and superior qualities; seven hundred kevalins; seven hundred who could transform themselves; five hundred sages of mighty intellect; four hundred professors who were never vanquished in disputes; seven hundred male and fourteen hundred female disciples who reached perfection; and eight hundred sages in their last birth." During Mahavira's own lifetime nine of the Gaṇadharas attained Kevala-jnana. Two survived him, Gautama

and Sudharmā, and as Gautama attained Kevala-jnana just as Mahavira breathed his last and obtained Nirvāṇa, Sudharmā become the head of the order. From Sudharmā it is possible to trace a whole list of succession of the leaders of the order right upto the present time.

Mahavira's third order consisted of laymen. They were householders who did not actually renounce the world but who could and did keep his rule in a modified form, while their alms supported the professed monks. As Mrs. Stevenson says, the genius for organisation which Mahavira possessed is shown in nothing more clearly than in the formation of this and the order of laywomen. The laymen are said to have numbered during Mahavira's lifetime one hundred and fifty-nine thousand men; according to the Digambara version the number given is one hundred thousand ; the laywomen numbered three hundred and fifty-eight thousands.

In one of the well-known Jain Āgamas, *Uvāsagadasāo*, the names of ten of the more important lay followers of Mahavira are given. Vāṇijyagrāma, Campa, Baranasi, Alabha (or Alavi), Kāmpilyapura, Polāsapura, Rājagrha and Sravasti are mentioned as the important ones among the places that were visited by the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira. The town of Campa had near it the shrine of Purnabhadra, Vāṇijyagrāma, the shrine called Dutipalāsa ; Baranasi the Koṣṭhaka shrine ; Alabha, the Garden called Śaṅkhavana ; Kāmpilyapura, the garden called Sahasramravana ; Polasapura, a garden known by the name of Sahasramravana ; Rajgrha, a shrine called Gunasila ; and Sravasti, the Koshtaka shrine. In Vāṇijyagrāma the great lay disciples of Mahavira and the lay supporters of his order were Ananda and his wife Sivananda; in Campa Kamadeva and his wife Bhadra ; in Baranasi, Culanipriya and his wife Shyama, and Suradeva and his wife Dhanya; in Alabha, Cullasataka and his wife Bahula ; in Kāmpilyapura, Kundakolita and his wife Pusya; in Polasapura,

Sakadalaputra and his wife Agnimitra ; in Rajgrha, Mahaśataka ; and in Sravasti, Nandinipriya and his wife Asvini, and Salatipriya and his wife Phalaguni. These lay disciples are all mentioned as persons of opulence and influence, and as those noted for their piety and devotion. Ananda of Vāṇijyagrāma is described as householder who "possessed a treasure of four krór measures of gold deposited in a safe place, a capital of four krór measures of gold put out on interest, a well stocked estate of the value of four krór measures of gold, and four herds, each herd consisting of ten thousand heads of cattle." He "was a person whom many kings and princes and merchants made it a point to refer to, and to consult, on many affairs and matters needing advice,.....in short, on all sorts of business." He was also the main pillar, as it were, of his own family, their authority, support, mainstay and guide. In short, he was a cause of prosperity to whatever business he was concerned with." Even the Buddhist texts bear testimony to numerous rich householders being among the lay disciples of Mahavira.

### *Nirvāṇa*

Mahavira attained *nirvāṇa* at Pāvā in 527 B. C. at the age of 72. The Licchavis and Mallas were two peoples to whom the rise of Mahavira was an object of national pride, and accordingly, it is said in the Kalpasūtra that when Mahavira died, the eighteen confederate kings of Kasi and Kosala, the nine Mallakis and the nine Licchavis, instituted an illumination saying 'Since the light of intelligence is gone, let us make an illumination of material matter !'

---

## RIVAL SECTS

As has been said before, India was during Mahavira's age passing through a period of unusual religious enthusiasm. The country as a whole, and in particular the eastern provinces, were bristling with conflicting views and rival schemes. Numerous individual philosophers and religious sects were preaching their doctrines, and the relations between them were not always of the happiest kind. The animosities of the time may be well illustrated by the remark made by Mahavira's newly ordained lay disciple, Ananda, in *Uvāsagadasāo sūtra*; "Truly, Revered Sir, it does not befit me from this day forward to praise and worship any man of a heretical community, or any of the devas of a heretical community, or any of the objects of reverence to them; or without being first addressed by them, to address them or converse with them; or to give or supply them with food or drink except it be by the command of the King or the community or any powerful man or deva or one's own elders or by the exigencies of living." Even the *Acārāṅga sūtra* explicitly says that "to friendly or hostile heretics one should not give alms, drink, dainties and spices.....nor do them service....." The insistence on the necessity of right faith is indicative of the same thing. Faith has been held to be easier to obtain by those who, though not versed in the sacred doctrines, are not acquainted with other systems and hold no wrong doctrines. Among the eight principles on which the excellence of faith rests, the most important have been mentioned as the absence of preference for heretics and the non-shaking of right belief at the prosperity of heretical sects.

### *Classification of creeds :*

The account of philosophical schools mentioned in the Jain canonical literature refers to three hundred and sixty three different creeds divided into four great schools—*Kriyāvada*, comprising 180 different doctrines; *Akriyāvada* 84, *Ajñānavāda* 67, and *Vinayavāda* 32.

*Kriyāvāda* is the school which admits the existence of the soul by itself (स्वतः) for all eternity (नित्य). Among the *Kriyāvādins* there may be those who believe that the soul exists in its own nature and is eternal but acts through time (कालवादी) and those who believe that the soul exists in itself eternally through *Īśvara* (ईश्वरवादी) or those who believe that the soul exists by itself eternally through *Ātman* (आत्मवादी) or those who believe that the soul exists in itself eternally through *Niyati* (the fixed order of things नियतिवादी) or those who believe that the soul exists by itself eternally through *Svabhāva* or nature (स्वभाववादी). There may be further divisions of the *Kriyāvādins* according to whether they consider that the soul exists but is not eternal or that the soul exists but not of itself, that is to say, that it can be known only by contrast with other things. The *Kriyāvādins*, among whom Jainism may also be included, hold the belief that unless a sinful thought is translated into action or a sinful act performed with a sinful motive, the full karmic consequences will not follow and the soul will be affected but slightly, and further that misery is produced by one's own acts and not by the act of somebody else, viz., fate, creator etc.

*Akriyāvāda* denies the existence of the soul and considers that everything has a momentary existence and that a state comes to an end the moment it comes into existence. Without continuity of existence no *Kriyā* is possible, so that when existence is believed to be momentary in its character, the philosophy is essentially *Akriyāvāda*. The *Akriyāvādins* are mentioned in the texts as not admitting that the action of the soul is transmitted to future moments and as holding that nothing exists and all forecasts of the future are false. The Buddhists are obviously included in this school, for their doctrine is that everything has but a momentary existence and that there is no continuous identity of existence between a thing as it is now and as it will be in the next moment. By not admitting the existence of *Jiva*, they were considered by the Jainas as denying *Karman* as well.



The *Ajñānavāda* school denies the necessity or importance of knowledge. According to them knowledge is not the highest accomplishment, for where there is knowledge there is contradiction, dispute and discussion. On the other hand, *ajñāna* or negation of knowledge may be the condition of the absence of pride and ill-will and so removal of bondage. Knowledge produces volition, and the result of volition is karma and therefore bondage, while *ajñāna* generates absence of volition.

*Vinayavāda* upholds the supremacy of reverence as the cardinal virtue that leads to perfection.

In Buddhist literature also there is an elaborate description of contemporary schools. The classification given in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* divides contemporary philosophical thought into sixty-two schools, like the Eternalists, holding that the soul and the world are both eternal, the semi-Eternalists, believing that the Brahma is eternal but not individual souls; the Extensionists, who built up their doctrines round the finiteness or infiniteness of the world, and the Eel-Wrigglers, who gave no categorical replies to any questions but specialised in ambiguous and equivocating replies. It may be pointed out that the disputes between the various schools did not always arise on properly religious subjects. At times disputes arose over cosmographic details, as illustrated in *Bhagawati Sutra* in the story of Prince Siva where the duration of the gods' lives in different heavens became a matter of hot debate.

### *Buddhists :*

We know that the most important rival creed with which the Jain preachers were faced was that of the Buddhists and that it was at the hands of the Buddhists that the Nirgranthas suffered most in later times. But in the Jain canonical literature there are very scanty reference to Buddhism, although Buddhist literature

on the other hand abounds with criticisms of the Jain doctrine. For this there may be several reasons. The Buddha was a junior contemporary of Mahavira and had therefore greater need for counter-acting and criticising the creed of the latter than Mahavira had for combating the doctrine of a junior. Not only was Mahavira senior, the system which he was preaching was also, as we have stated before an ancient system. The rivalry between the two sects grew stronger after Mahavira's death.

Nevertheless references to the Buddhists as an heretical order are there in the Jain canons. In *Achārāṅgasūtra* there is mention of a school of heretics who justify the use of water on the ground of having permission to drink it or take it for toilet purposes; this undoubtedly refers to the Buddhists for the Buddha had declared that there was no sin in either drinking water or in using it for bath and wash. He permitted bath and washing to his ascetic disciples. Their doctrine of the five *Skandhas* of momentary existence has been ascribed to "some fools". There is an undeniable reference in this to the *Rūpa*, *Vedanā*, *Vijñāna*, *Samjñā* and *Samskāra skandhas* of the Buddhists. The *Ājīvādins* who deny Karman and do not admit that the action of the soul is transmitted to future moments, are possibly the Buddhists also. In *Sutrakṛtāṅga Sutra*, in the discussions of Adda a man appears and argues that if one pierces a lump of oilcake with a spit mistaking it for a man or a gourd mistaking it for a baby and roasts it, one will be guilty of murder; while if a savage puts a man on a spit and roasts him mistaking him for a lump of oilcake or a baby mistaking it for a gourd, he will not be guilty of murder. This is an account, although exaggerated, of the Buddhist view that motive determines whether an act is sinful or not.

### *Ājīvikas :*

The best known heresy to the Nirgranthas was, however, the doctrines of the *Ājīvikas*. They have

been referred to with the greatest frequency and their doctrines have been denounced with very great vehemence and care. From descriptions in the Jain sutras the Ājīvika doctrine would appear to be an extreme form of *Niyativāda*, that there is no such thing as exertion or labour or power or manly strength but that all things are caused by destiny which is unalterably fixed.

“Saddālaputta, the follower of the Ājīvika, one day brought out his air-dried potter’s ware from within his workshop, and placed them in the heat of the sun.

Mahavira, who happened to go there, asked “Saddālaputta, how is this potter’s ware made?”

Saddālaputta : “Reverend Sir, this ware is at first clay, then it is kneaded with water, and then it is mixed well together with ashes and dung; then it is placed on the wheel, and finally many bowls and jars of various sizes are made.”

Mahavira : “Saddālaputta, is your ware made by dint of exertion and manly strength, or on the other hand, is it made without exertion and manly strength?”

Saddālaputta : “Reverend Sir, it is made without exertion and manly strength, and all things are unalterably fixed.”

Mahavira : “Saddālaputta, if any one of thy men were to steel thy unbaked or baked ware or scatter it about or make holes in it or let it drop into pieces or place it outside unguarded or if he were to indulge in outrageous familiarities with thy wife Aggimittā, what punishment would thou inflict on that man?”

Saddālaputta : “Reverend Sir, that man I will curse or beat or tie up or frighten or threaten or cuff or fine or bully or even before his time deprive him of his life.”

Mahavira then pointed out that if all things were unalterably fixed and depended not on exertion, then

he ought not to take any action against his servant's conduct for the servant was not responsible for it. This convinced Saddālaputta of the falseness of Ājīvika doctrines and he was converted to the creed of Mahavira."

Dr. Barua has collected and reviewed exhaustively all the materials available in Jain and Buddhist texts on the history of Ājīvikas and the life and teachings of Gosala, the founder of the Ājīvika order. The order did not die with its leader, although it undoubtedly lost its vigour and following to a large extent. The *Bhagavati* Sūtra gives a detailed description of the meeting between Gosala and Mahavira and of the manner of Gosala's death.

"The headquarters of the Order was in Śavattthi in the shop of the potter woman Hālāhalā. In the twenty-fourth year of Gosala's ascetic life he was visited by six ascetics with whom he discussed their doctrines and propounded his own theory from the eight Mahani-mittas belonging to the Pūrvas consisting of the principles of obtainment and non-obtaining, pleasure and pain, life and death. He met a disciple of Mahavira and notified to him his intention of destroying Mahavira by means of his fiery forces. The threat was conveyed to Mahavira who forbade Nirgrantha ascetics to hold any communication with Gosala. Surrounded by his disciples, Gosala called on Mahavira and angrily ridiculed him for having called Gosala a disciple of Mahavira. "Mankhaliputta who was a disciple of Mahavira" said Gosala "was dead and reborn in the heavens as a god. But I whose name was Udāyi was born in the body of Ajjuna and entered in the seventh re-animation the body of Gosala, which I still hold." He then went on to narrate in detail the processes of reanimation he had undergone in the bodies of different persons in different places and how in his seventh and last reanimation he obtained omniscience in the body of Gosala in the potter shop of Hālāhalā. Mahavira in reply told him that he was like a thief who being chased

by villagers attempted to conceal his identity under various disguises and in various places of hiding. Gosala was enraged at this and hotly abused Mahavira. A disciple of the latter intervened but was burnt up by Gosala's fiery forces. Another disciple also met with the same fate. Mahavira himself now rebuked Gosala who attempted to burn him but was unsuccessful. A scene followed of trial of strength between the two teachers. They parted and Mahavira instructed his disciples to go and annoy Gosala with questions.

“After sometime Gosala was stricken with a fever and being delirious he held a mango in his hand, drank liquors, sang, danced and made improper advances to Hālāhalā, and sprinkled on himself the cool muddy water from the potter's vessels, which acts, Mahavira explained to his disciples, led to the Ājīvika doctrines of the eight Finalities (Atthacarimāim). The first four of the eight Finalities were the last four acts performed by Gosala, viz., the last drink, the song, the last dance and the last improper solicitation. The other four were the last tornado, the last sprinkling elephant, the last fight with big stones and missiles, and the last Tirthankara who is Gosala himself.

Gosala's sprinkling himself with the muddy water from the earthen vessels gave rise to the doctrine of the four things that may be used as drinks and the four things as their substitutes by virute of the coolingness. Those that may be used as water are the cow's urine, water accidentally collected in a Potter's vessels, water heated by the sun, and water dripping from a rock. Those that may be used as substitutes are holding in the hand a dish or a bottle or a jar or a pot which is cool or moist; squeezing in the mouth a mango or a hog-plum or a jujube or a *tinduka* fruit when it is unripe or uncooked, but not drinking its juice and feeling the touch of the moist hands of the gods Punnabhadda and Manibhadda when they appear on the last night of six months to one who eats pure food for six months, lies successively for two months each on bare ground,

on wooden planks, and on *kusa* grass. He who submits to touch of the two gods furthers the work of venomous snakes but he who does not do so generates in himself a fire which burns his body and he dies and attains liberation.

Ayambula, an Ājīvika, came to visit Gosala at the time and felt ashamed finding Gosala in a delirium. He was about to go away but Ājīvika elders called him back, explained the new doctrines and asked him to put his question to Gosala after throwing away the mango in his hand. Ayambula did so and asked about the halla insect. Gosala replied "This which you see is not a mango but only the skin of a mango. You ask about the halla insect, it is like the root of the bamboo; play the lute, man, play the lute." Then Gosala feeling the end approaching called his disciples and requested them to observe his funeral with all honours and proclaim that he was the last Tirthankara. But afterwards he felt that he was not an omniscient but a false, teacher and a humbug but that Mahavira was the true Jina. Then he called his disciples and asked them to treat him with dishonour after he was dead and proclaim his misdeeds and the Jinahood of Mahavira. Then he died. The Ājīvika *theras* closed the door and pretended to carry out Gosala's last instructions, and then they opened the doors and gave him a funeral according to his original wishes."

The account may be exaggerated but seems to be fundamentally well-based. It is also corroborated by Buddhist texts. The Buddhists had no cause for special resentment against the Ājīvikas, yet even the Buddhists do not refer to Gosala with respect. Dr. Hoernle mentions in his article on the Ājīvikas in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics that in the mouth of the Buddhists 'Ājīvika' was a term of reproach, meant to stigmatise Gosala and his followers as professionals. Gosala's humble origin and humble connections may have been partly responsible for the contempt with which he was looked upon by the other religious leaders.

Gosala's father was Mankhali, who used to wander about from place to place exhibiting a picture. He once came with his wife to Sarvana and took up his lodging in the cowshed of a wealthy Brahmin called Gobahula, and Gosala is reputed to have been born there. For some time Gosala himself seems to have followed his father's calling, but ultimately he took up ascetic life and for sometime was also a companion of Mahavira during the period of his preparation. The story of Gosala's separation from Mahavira, assumption of the Jinahood, and the establishment of the Ājīvika order has already been told in a previous chapter.

### *Brahmanic schools :*

Jain literature is full of references to numerous schools of popular Brahmanism. Among heretical doctrines there is mention of some who hold that the owning of possessions and the engaging in undertakings is quite compatible with the attainment of perfection. This is obviously a reference to Brahmanical priests who supported a non-ascetic religion of rituals and ceremonies and themselves possessed wealth and property. The Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta and other views also have been referred to in order to equip the Nirgrantha ascetic with the usual beliefs of the common people entertained under wrong understanding, and also with a view to show up the apparently contradictory views held by the Vedantists and the Puranists. The Philosophy of the Nastikas, the materialists, who deny the existence of the soul, is also mentioned as a wrong doctrine.

There is mention of a host of minor schools, holding quite unusual views : (1) That a Jiva performed right conduct and wrong conduct at the same time, (2) That there is no harm in enjoying the pleasures of the senses, for it gave relief to the enjoyer without causing harm to any one else, (3) that the soul and everything else is mere appearance, mirage, an illusion, a dream, a phantasy, etc.

*Nihnavaś*

The twenty-seventh year of Mahavira's ascetic life, that is, the fifteenth year after the attainment of kevalihood, the year of his famous encounter with Gosāla, was marked by the occurrence of the first schism in the community, when Jamāli separated from the Lord with a small band of his disciples who afterwards gradually left him. The event that had led to the dissension can briefly be stated as follows. Once Jamāli begged permission to go wandering with a large number of ascetics, but Mahavira gave no reply even after being asked three times. Jamāli, however, did not wait for the permission any further and left Mahavira, together with his own disciples. While thus wandering independently, once upon a time he went to Śrāvastī and stayed at the Tinduka garden. He had been suffering from fever at the time and asked his companion ascetics to stretch a bed to lie down upon. While they were stretching the bed, he asked them whether it was ready. They replied in the affirmative. But when Jamāli found that it was only being made ready, he got angry, and ascribed their affirmative answer to their false doctrine that a thing in the making is as good as a thing completely made (करमाणे कडे). His companions tried to convince him of the soundness of the doctrine, but he would not listen to them. There was much discussion about Jamāli's refutation of the doctrine, and some of his disciples left him consequently. Jamāli visited Mahavira at Campā in order to inform him that he had attained omniscience. But when Mahavira refused to admit his claim, Jamāli felt humiliated and finally left him to establish his own order. His order, however, does not appear to have lasted for long. It is most probable that his order did not survive him. Jamāli is the first *Nihnavaś* 'dissenter' in the *Sangha* established by Mahavira.

The texts record six more such *Nihnavaś* belonging to different periods, within the first six centuries



of the *Nirvāṇa* of Lord Mahavira in the history of the Jain church. They are Tiṣyagupta (16 years after Mahavira's Kevalihood) the *ācārya* of the *Jīva-prādeśikas*; Āśādha (214 years after *Vira-nirvāṇa*) the *ācārya* of the *avyaktikas*; Aśvamiṭra (220 A.V.) the *ācārya* of the *Sāmuṇḍedikas*, Ganga (228 A.V.) the *ācārya* of the *dvaikriyas*; Śaḍūlūka (also known as Rohagupta, 544 A. V.), the *ācārya* of the *Trairāśikas*; and Goṣṭhāmāhila, (584 A.V.) the *ācārya* of the *Abaddhikas*.

The *Jīva-prādeśikas* held that the last space-point of the soul was the soul proper in view of the fact that the soul is incomplete and, therefore, not soul proper unless it includes its last space-point which completes its being. But they did not notice the fact that any and every space-point of the soul could be considered as the last space-point and as such they insisted on a doctrine which had no sound reasoning behind it. Tiṣyagupta formulated the doctrine on the basis of some texts which he failed to understand properly. The *Avyaktikas* were sceptics who were suspicious of everybody and so did not bow down to anyone. The result was that their lay disciples also began to withhold their respectful homage from them. It is said that the *Avyaktikas* developed this sceptic attitude after they were made to bow down to the corpse of their *ācārya* named Āśādha, who reinhabited his own corpse, out of mercy, in order to bring to a speedy end the *Yoga* of his disciples. The *Sāmuṇḍedikas* were those who believed in the momentariness of all things. Aśvamiṭra was their *ācārya*. He misinterpreted a text and developed the doctrine. He remained quite blind to the other texts which clearly stated the permanence as well as constituting the nature of a thing. The *Dvaikriyas* upheld the doctrine of the possibility of the experience of two-fold actions at one and the same time. Ganga the *ācārya* of *Dvaikriyas* was one day crossing a river, when he experienced both cold and heat, and jumped to the conclusion that they are felt simultaneously. The Āgama text, however, clearly

denies the possibility of simultaneous occurrence of two-fold experience. The *Trairāṣikas* were those who believed in the three categories of *Jīva*, *Ajīva* and *No-jīva* instead of the two, viz., *Jīva* and *Ajīva* as accepted in the *Āgamas*. *Ṣadūlūka* was their *ācārya*, who is said to have invented the third category in order to defeat his opponent by confronting him with a new problem. But afterwards when he was asked by his *guru* to admit the trick before the judges, he disagreed and was consequently turned out of the *Sangha*. The *Abaddhikas* upheld that the *Karma*-matter can only touch the soul, but cannot become one with it, because if it became one with the soul, there would be no possibility of re-separation. This doctrine openly goes against the accredited view that *Karma* unites with the soul exactly as heat unites with iron and water with milk. Goṣṭhāmāhila was the *ācārya* of the *Abaddhikas*.

The sects founded by these *nihnavas*, it appears from the accounts given, did not survive their founders. The accounts further reveal the fact that the Jaina *Sangha* was strong enough to foil the attempts of these dissenters at bringing about any untoward change in it.

---

## CONCLUSION

Born and brought up in a Society informed with democratic ethos and in an age of great intellectual stir, social dissatisfaction, philosophical doubts and religious confusion, and deeply influenced by the ethical tradition of Pārśva, Mahavira chose, when he was thirty, the life of an ascetic seeking after truth and enlightenment. After twelve years of penance and suffering and rigorous practice of spiritual detachment, he attained such knowledge as was perfect and absolute, and developed such compassion for the afflicted world and strove so much for its redemption that he came to be regarded a *Tirthankara*. Mahavira showed wonderful ability in the organization of his *Sangha* which consisted of the ascetic as well as the layman, men as well as women. He did not consider the layman as incapable of spiritual uplift, and, therefore, accorded an honourable place to him in the *Sangha*. The layman is as important a limb of the *Sangha* as the ascetic, and it is incumbent upon both to cooperate and push the *Sangha* forward towards spiritual uplift. Mahavira's *Sangha* was open to all irrespective of caste, colour and sex. Merit and not birth was the determinant of status in society. Ability and not sex was regarded as the criterion for admission into the higher order. Superstitious ritualism and belief in the capacity of gods to help man were discarded. The existence of God as the Creator of the world was denied, and man was held responsible for his own fortune as well as misfortune, freedom as well as bondage. Sacrifice of the animal was replaced by the sacrifice of the brute self. Mahavira's life is a symbol of the mortification of the flesh for the development of the Spirit. It is spiritual joy, and not heavenly pleasure, that is worth pursuit. Mahavira did not encourage acquisition of supernormal powers for the victimization of the weak. He prohibited the use of such powers even for self-protection. He disparaged social iniquity, economic rivalry and political

enslavement. Mahavira took it upon himself to work out and propagate a veritable spiritual democracy in the form of Jainism. He delivered his message in the tongue of the people. He did not like the aristocratic aloofness and mystifying secrecy of the Brahmanical thinkers in matters religious and philosophical. There was no need of interpreters of the tongue of gods. There can be no mediator between man and God. Mahavira popularized philosophy and religion and threw open the portals of heaven to the down-trodden and the weak, the humble and the lowly. To him spirituality was not the property of the privileged few, but a valued possession of each and all. It is only in the form of human being that the spirit can realise itself. Gods are inferior to the man of conduct. They symbolize only a stage in the development of the spirit. The final development, however, is possible only in the human form. The idea of an ever-free omnipotent Creator God and His incarnation is exploded as a myth, and the responsibility of creation is put on the shoulders of those who inhabit and enjoy it. Conduct is judged by the spiritual law of *ahimsā*, perfect and absolute. The means is not justified by the end. It is perhaps with reference to these revolutionary ideals that a modern critic, informed with the faith in merciful God, has characterized Jainism as "a religion in which the chief points insisted upon are that one should deny God, worship man and nourish vermin". Philosophy, with Mahavira, is not an intellectual system based on data supplied by psychological analysis, or a metaphysical speculation based on scientific investigation, but an all-comprehensive view based on spiritual realization wherein all other views find proper justification. These are, in brief, the general features of the message of Lord Mahavira.

The roots of Jainism can be traced out in that floating mass of *Śramaṇa* literature which developed side by side with the ancient Vedic, and had, according to Dr. Maurice Winternitz, the following characteristic

features : "It disregards the system of castes and *āshramas* ; its heroes are, as a rule, not gods and Rishis, but kings or merchants or even Shudras. The subjects of poetry taken up by it are not Brahmanic myths and legends, but popular tales, fairy stories, fables and parables. It likes to insist on the misery and suffering of *Samsāra*, and it teaches a morality of compassion and *Ahiṃsā*, quite distinct from the ethics of Brāhmanism with its ideals of the great sacrificer and generous supporter of the priests and its strict adherence to the caste system." "Jainism together with Sāṅkhya-Yoga," according to Dr. Hermann Jacobi, "is the earliest representative of that mental revolution which brought about the close of the Vedic and inaugurated the new period of Indian culture which has lasted through the middle ages almost down to the present time." We can clearly discern in the formative period, nay, throughout the development, of our culture, two distinct forces perpetually struggling for supremacy and evolving a more and more rational culture. Of these two forces, one attracts us to the spiritual life by insisting on misery and suffering, while the other strives to keep us attached to the duties and responsibilities of social life. The advent of Mahavira and the Buddha represents a period of supremacy of the former over the later. This period was, of course, preceded by a long period of philosophical ferment and religious unrest. There was strenuous search for the ideal. Two distinct ways of thought, Brāhmanic and Śramanic, were struggling for supremacy and were influencing each other. It was impossible that one should supersede the other. But they evolved a system which had a strong note of asceticism and was predominantly Śramanic. This was embodied in the *Cāturyāma dharma* of Pārśva and finally developed by Mahavira into what is called Jainism. Buddhism too is a similar, though decidedly later, growth with a wonderfully rational outlook. The investigations about the antiquity of Jainism are by no means complete. We look to an intenser research for more enlightenment.

We have discussed at some length the story of Gosāla's companionship and final separation with Mahavira. The story of his last encounter with Mahavira has also been related. We have shown the untenability of the fanciful opinion of some scholars that Mahavira was a disciple of Gosāla for some time. Our conclusion is that Mahavira and Gosāla did not have a teacher and disciple relationship at all. Mahavira and Gosāla were just two associates in a common concern, two *Sādhanakas* who lived together for six years in asceticism. Later on there sprang up acute differences of opinion between the two. They separated from each other and became irreconcilable opponents, fighting out their differences generally through their followers. After six months from the separation with Mahavira, it is said, Gosāla acquired supernormal powers, proclaimed himself a Jina, and founded the order of the Ājīvikas. It is also probable that the order of the Ājīvikas was already there and Gosāla only assumed its leadership proclaiming himself the last Jina. The implication of the doctrine of 'seven reanimations' advocated by Gosāla is not very clear; most probably Gosāla referred to the six past leaders of the order, and considered himself to be the seventh and the last. The problem is to be studied afresh, and there is every possibility of fruitful result. There is, however, no ambiguity about the central doctrine of Gosāla. He was an uncompromising fatalist. For him there was no such thing as freedom of will, all things being caused by destiny which was unalterably fixed. This contrasts strongly with Mahavira's ideal of *nirvāṇa* as something to be achieved by toil and labour, and not something to be presented by destiny in due course. There is neither scope nor necessity for voluntary efforts in the system of Gosāla. We do not know whether the Ājīvika order survived him for long in its original shape, although a reference to an Ājīvika order is found in an inscription of as late as the thirteenth century A.D.

The Jaina doctrine of knowledge is assuredly a valuable contribution to the epistemological thought. Knowledge is inherent in soul and depends for its expression upon the disentanglement of the soul from the forces that vitiate its intrinsic capacities. The *Kaṣāyas* of attachment and aversion are held responsible for the obstruction of the capacity to know, and it is by the total destruction of these *Kaṣāyas* that the soul achieves 'the blaze of omniscience'. Absolute annihilation of knowledge is impossible, and the knowledge is at its minimum in the one-sensed organism. Perfection is achieved not by adding one knowledge to another, but by removing the cause of imperfection, which consists in the *Kaṣāyas*. Ignorance is only an incidental effect of a more fundamental cause, namely, the *Karma* that blurs the right intuition.

The *Karma*-doctrine is another glorious achievement of the Jaina thinkers. *Karma* is a substantive force, a sort of infra-atomic particles which have the peculiar property of developing the effects of merit and demerit. "As heat can unite with iron and water with milk, so *Karma* unites with the soul." Life is a struggle between spirit and matter. The material body is to be subdued by the spiritual self. *Samsāra* consists in spirit subdued by matter. Evolution means evolution of the spirit followed, as a matter of necessity, by the evolution of the body. The body is the instrument of expression, and so the perfection of the spirit is synchronized with the perfection of the body. What controls the universe is the law of *Karma*. The world is made, not by gods and angels, but by the *Karma* of the spirits. The history of man is determined by his own voluntary choice. Man enters the world of his own creation and fashions it according to his own designs. He can transcend the inherited limitations by his will and action, and become the architect of his own future. The theory of fourteen states in the ascent to the state of Final Liberation is the logical consummation of the doctrine of *Karma*.

Indian religions lay stress on asceticism and life negation, and Jainism does so in a special measure. Jainism prescribes even the abandonment of the body in case it fails to fulfil the demand of the spirit. This exposes Jainism to the charge that its ethics is negative and passive. The Jaina ethics will plead guilty to this charge. The motive behind ethical practices is that of purging the soul of selfish impulses so that it may realize itself. Spiritual strenuousness, meditation, the freeing of the mind from hatred, anger and lust are emphasized. What appears to be passivity is intense concentration of consciousness where the soul lays hold immediately upon itself. Life affirmation is fraught with more dangers and pitfalls than those of life negation. If affirmation leads to progress, negation certainly leads to peace. World has suffered more at the hands of the progress-loving peoples than at the hands of the peace-loving nations. Jainism discourages aggressiveness, but never supports cowardice. Peaceful courting of death without hatred for the murderer is more praiseworthy than violent defence. The law of non-violence is regarded as the supreme law. Justice itself is judged by this law. Consistent application of this universal law of non-violence in practical life exposed Jainism to the ridicule of those who were satisfied merely with the theoretical extolling of the law. Its appeal to the rational minds, however, was great and gradually it gripped a considerable portion of the populace.

Our study of the position of the rival sects has been very brief. We have annexed a short note on *Nihnavas* in order to show the inherent strength of the organization of the Jaina *Sangha* to deal with internal dissensions.

Mahavira left the world, realized the truth, and came back to the world to preach it. There was immediate response from the people and he got disciples and followers. Eleven learned Brāhmīns were the first to accept his discipleship and become ascetics. They



were the heads of *ganas* of ascetics, and as such were called *ganadharas*. They remained faithful to their teacher throughout their lives. Indrabhūti Gautama was the eldest disciple of Mahavira. He was very fond of his Master, and had numerous interesting dialogues with him. Mahavira was never tired of answering questions and problems of various types, scientific, ethical, metaphysical, and religious. He had broad outlook and scientific accuracy. His answers were never vague or mystifying. He had firm conviction and resolute will. His tolerance was infinite. He remained unmoved when two of his disciples were burnt to ashes before his eyes by Goṣāla who was then preparing to strike Mahavira himself. But he would never surrender a single point in argument about spiritual conviction and ethical conduct. Right conduct is conduct according to right conviction. Right conviction is conviction based on spiritual realization. A man of right conviction and right conduct has fear from none and tolerance for all. Mahavira always surrendered his body, but never his spirit. Retention of the spirit demands surrender of the body. Suffering and penance are the conditions of freedom. Mahavira was a cold realist. He had not faith in warm idealism. He had immense faith in human nature, but he always insisted on vigilance against indolence, physical, moral and spiritual. He is reported to have once exhorted his favourite disciple Indrabhūti Gautama to always retain strenuousness in the following words: 'You have well-nigh crossed the great ocean. Why do you loiter on the shore? Make haste to pass on to the other side. Do not be indolent, O Gautama, for a single moment.' Inward strenuousness and affirmation of spirit is sometimes associated with outward passivity and negation of life. This is not understandable. Life is an evil so long as it is rooted in desires. Negation of life rooted in desires is not an unsocial act. It is but reinstatement of the society in harmony with the laws of the spirit. It is self-contradiction on the surface for the sake of self-realization in the depth. In this

sense, individualism is not incompatible with social progress. Mahavira was never indifferent to the well-being of his *Sangha*. He worked strenuously for and took interest in the minutest details of the organization. One is amazed to find in him this rare combination of absolute negation of desires and immense interest in action. Mahavira was neither a 'delicate mystic' nor an 'energetic prophet.' He was a thorough-going rationalist who would base his action on his conviction, unmindful of the context of established custom or inherited tradition. This is the keynote of the personality of Lord Mahavira.

106

---